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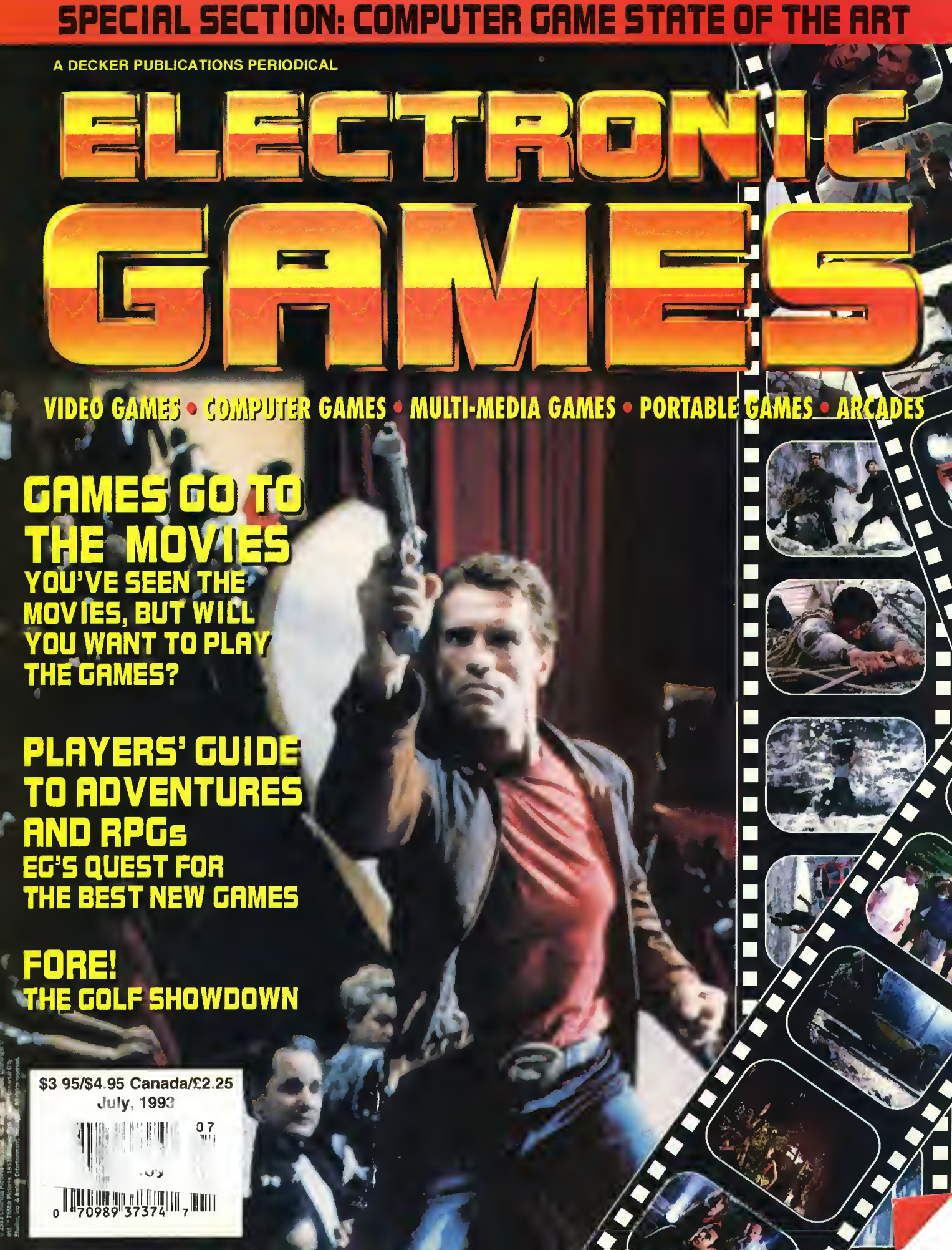

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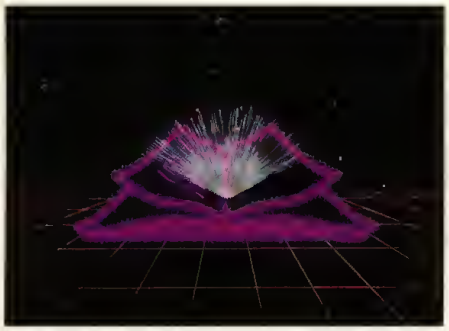

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Fantasy games gain popularity
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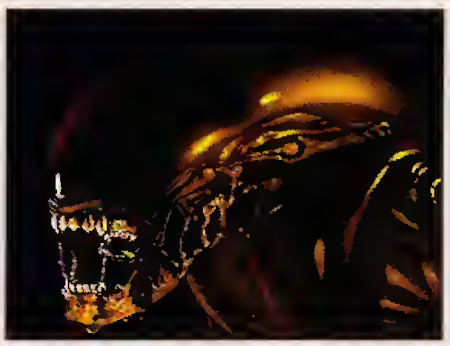

The silver screen goes video
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Practice your swing, rain or shine
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FEATURES

- **Players' Guide to Adventure and Role-Playing Games**
  Adventure and RPG games have grown in popularity, number, and complexity over the past few years. **EG** ventures into the caverns to uncover the great original games as well as find out what's in store for future quests..... **27**

- **Games Go to the Movies**
  Most game players are well aware of the many titles that are pro duced in correlation to blockbuster Hollywood hits. **EG** looks at the brief history of movie-oriented games and lets you in on the game business that works behind show business. **38**

- **Fore! Handicapping Golf Games**
  Warm summer weather means lots of time to hit the links! We take a look at golf simulations for video and computer formats that will keep your game sharp after those rained out tee times..... **56**

- **Flying Head to Head**
  EG pits Star Fox and Super Strike Eagle in a duel! These games are tops in their field for the SNES, and we give each of them a thorough test flight..... **62**

About the art— We at EG would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:

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It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood, a beautiful day for a neighbor; would you be mine, could you be mine. — Mr. Rogers
This being our July issue, a few summer activities are starting to pop into my brain. Foremost among them would be the time honored summer activity of the neighborhood barbeque. So, why not invite some neighbors over and grill up some burgers and dogs. And if you need an extra for volleyball just drop me a line. I like my burgers medium-well, and I'll make my wife bring some chips and guacamole. Party on Garth.

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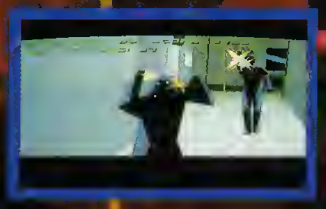

Screen shots shown are from the Amiga version of the game

OCP is sending in Rehab Officers to clear the streets of Old Detroit, making way for the construction of Delta City When ROBOCOP sees helpless families forced out of their homes as the bulldozers move in, he joins the resistance movement to battle the Rehabs!

Armed with a new multi-weapon arm attachment containing a large-bore cannon and a smart bomb, plus a gyropack for airborne assault capability, ROBOCOP faces a batallion of ED-209's, tanks, heavy artillery and a new adversary, OTOMO The odds seem impossible, but remember—you're ROBOCOP!

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The name of the game

ocean

POWER ON!

Fair Play for Games

Gaming magazine editorials sometimes give advice to consumers, manufacturers, and retailers about their rights and responsibilities. Sometimes it's wise counsel. Sometimes it's self-serving psycho-babble. Good or bad, it boils down to telling other folks what to do. At least it's free.

Ever notice how infrequently you read about standards for the magazines themselves? In some cases, it's because you can't talk about something you don't have. The magazine business is a hotbed of competition, and there are always folks willing to cut corners for a fancied edge.

Seriously, I can't talk about how other magazines do it, but I thought you'd be interested in the principles that guide our reviewing effort. Our belief that games are works of art worthy of serious consideration keeps us from reviewing incomplete games. That would be like reviewing the first draft of a novel.

I don't think it serves the needs of gaming consumers to review products that may be drastically changed by the time they reach the public. Instead, we use incomplete versions as the basis for our numerous previews.

In practical terms, we review video and portable games from eproms. These are custom-programmed chips which are used to make the cartridges sold in stores. There's often a lag of several months between the arrival of the eprom at our office and the official release of the commercial product, so this enables us to beat our lead time and get timely analysis into your hands while the games are fresh in the stores.

Computer and multimedia games work a bit differently. The lag between finished beta and actual publication is often a matter of days. Most of the reviews are done from promotional copies furnished to us by publishers, though we do work from final betas if the company involved tells us that no more changes will be made.

The score box that ends each review suggests some of the things **EG** editors look for in an entertainment disk or cartridge. Sound, graphics, playability and complexity are vital considerations. They're not the only ones, though. I also weigh:

- Theme (what the game is about)
- Originality (what is new or different about the game's content or technology)
- Interface (the appropriateness and ease-of-use of the command system)
- Play-Mechanics (how much fun it is to perform the game's required actions)
- Replayability (how long it can be played before it gets boring)
- Play Experience (the level of satisfaction a gamer derives from playing it).

We probably spend time debating the merits of the numerical rating system more than any other aspect of the magazine. I'm in the minority that thinks the numbers are unnecessary if the review is solid, but most staffers believe the numbers are a shorthand that helps gaming consumers when they go shopping.

We rate games by comparing them to other titles produced for the same hardware platform and our estimation of that machine's potential capabilities. It wouldn't be fair to low-rate an 8-Bit game just because it doesn't look as good as a Sega CD disk, since the 8-Bit system can't match that quality under any circumstances.

Few games are all good or all bad, so the very top and bottom of the numerical scale seldom get used. Think of the ratings as analogous to the ones we used to get on our report cards. A game that receives 90 or above is an "A" title, 80 or more is a "B" and so on down to a rating under 65, which is a big red "F."

Now that you know how our system works, I hope more of you will try your hand at "The Jury" contest.

— Arnie Katz

ELECTRONIC GAMES

JULY, 1993

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 10

A DECKER PUBLICATIONS, INC. PERIODICAL

PUBLISHER
Steve Harris
EDITOR
Arnie Katz
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Bill Kunkel
NEWS EDITOR
Joyce Worley
SENIOR EDITOR
Marc Camron
MANAGING EDITOR
Ross Chamberlain
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Russ Ceccola, Ed Dille, Tim Ostermiller
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
John Danovich Joe Funk, Steve Honeywell, Frank Kurtz, David Pokorny Alex Reese, Ken Williams, Laurie Yates, Rick Zalud
ART DIRECTOR
Juli McMeekin
PRODUCTION
Colleen Bastien Production Manager
Mary Hatch, Jennifer Whitesides, Copy Editors
John Stockhausen, Ad Coordinator
Suzanne Farrell Ad Manager

CUSTOMER SERVICE
(515) 280-3861

NATIONAL ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Jeffrey Eisenberg
Eisenberg Communications Group
10920 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1120
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(310) 824-5297

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DISTRIBUTED BY:
WARNER PUBLISHING SERVICES, INC.

BPA Consumer Publication Membership Applied for January 1993
Electronic Games (ISSN #1063-8326) is published monthly by Decker Publications, Inc. 1920 Highland Ave., Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148. Application to mail at second class postage rates pending at Lombard, IL and additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for U.S.: $23.95, Canada and Mexico $33.95, and all others by air mail only $80.00. Single issue rates: $3.95. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Electronic Games, P.O. Box 7311, Red Oak, IA 51591-2311. For subscription changes, change of address, or correspondence concerning subscriptions call 800-444-3334. The editors and the publisher are not responsible for unsolicited materials. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the expressed written permission of Decker Publications, Inc.

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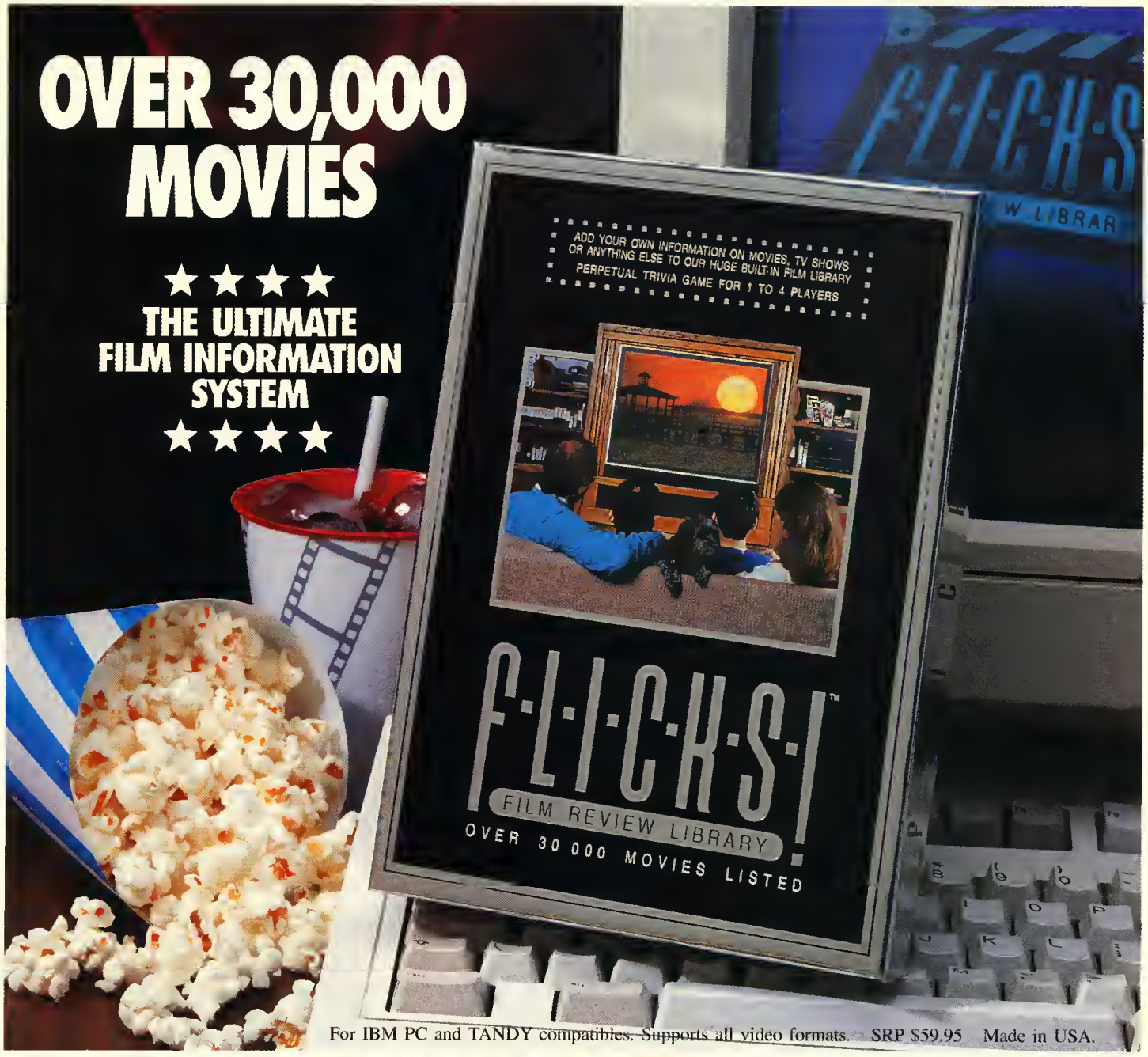

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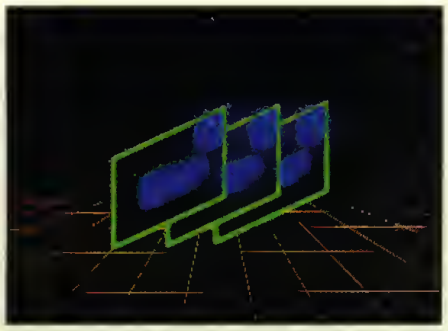

FEEDBACK

Letters From Our Readers

Grateful Fan

I just picked up the latest issue of **EG** (April '93), and I was naturally curious to see the results of 1992's "Best." Just having a nomination for Fanzine of the Year with three other fine publications was something I never thought could happen to *Computer Gaming Update*, but coming away with "Best in the World" is something I'll never forget. So many times have I thought of giving up; just to stop and get back to the real world. But winning... no, just getting a nomination was all that was needed to perk up my spirits. My sincere gratitude goes out to you for making room in 1992's Award Winners for fandom. And my appreciation goes to all the readers who voted us to the top!

Danny Han
Honolulu, HI

We share your delight, Danny, and thank you and your coeditors for putting out a fine fanzine. Keep up the good work!

Not the First

In issue 7's *Jury* you had reviews of **Joe Montana 3: NFL Sports Talk Football** and the first runner up review had incorrect information. It started "Being the first 12-Meg cart out for the Genesis..." etc. Actually, the first 12-Meg game made for any home system was **Star Control** (Accolade, Genesis).

Sahil Rahimi
Clinton, MS

and...

Not the First II

In the April issue, columnist Jay Carter writes in *Insert Coin Here* that Midway's **NBA Jam** constitutes "the appearance of the first major sports association license to ever grace a coin-op video game."

I call your attention to Bally/Midway's **NFL Football**. While this game might not have featured every team (the player could "pilot either the San Diego Chargers or the champion L.A. Raiders"), it did feature the license of a major sports association, the NFL. While this might not have been the first, it popped into my mind as the earliest I know of.

What happened to the **Saker-One** arcade game designed by John Sassak in which the player sat inside, for lack of a better word, an egg, that hovered on a 140 mph column of air while the player shot at enemy ships?

Shane Shaffer
Taneytown, MD

*Sometimes, Sahil and Shane, things do get by us. It's good to have savvy readers like you to keep us on our toes. However, Jay advises that he was well aware of **NFL Football**, which, limited by the technology of the time, did not have the interactive video game capabilities of present original design titles, but instead used film clips on an otherwise generic play mechanic. The operative term was "video game." (There was even an NFL pop-a-shot football novelty game.)*

*As to that **Saker-One** game, we remember being blown away by early reports on the game, but apparently it never got off the ground (!) in the arcades, economically speaking. Anybody else out there have word on it?*

More Coin-Op Pix?

I am one of the six persons who read the small print on the *Inside EG* page (May, page 4), and would like to respond to your question. I think more photos in the *Insert Coin* section would be a great advantage. Being a frequent visitor of our local arcades, I enjoy keeping up-to-date with all the new releases. And while your *Insert Coin* is very informative, I have a hard time getting excited about new games, because I have no idea what the graphics look like! Also, now that more interest in Japanese animation and games are starting to grow here in the U.S., I feel that more coverage of Japanese games should be added.

Scott Slauson
Fayetteville, AR

But more pictures would mean less information, Scott. Meanwhile, for Japanese coverage, by now you've seen our new section, A Look to the East.

Rumor Goin' Round

I recently heard Sega of America will be releasing the first magazine on CD! They say they may even include real arcade classics such as **Zaxxon**, **Congo Bongo**, **Frogger**, **Pengo** and more as free extras on the magazine CD. They say the magazine CD will be available to Sega CD owners through subscription.

I also learned **Street Fighter II Championship Edition** will be available on the Genesis and Sega CD later this year. Can you find out more on these subjects?

Bryan Hold
Seattle, WA

*Bryan, you may already have seen the Genesis version of **Street Fighter** by the time you read this. Indeed, Capcom has already prepared a special controller for it, just as they did for Nintendo last year.*

But while there have been reports of magazines on CD, such as a quarterly edition of Newsweek, *as of this writing nothing on a Sega magazine such as you describe has been confirmed.*

Wants Inside Story

My favorite part of your magazine is *Test Lab*, and I was wondering when you were going to feature the Sega Genesis, Sega CD and the Super NES. Also, I would like to see pictures of the insides of the subjects that you review in future installments of *Test Lab*. Keep up the good work!

Gabriel Hernandez
Avondale, AZ

Ed Dille was pleased that you like his column, Gabriel. Plans to cover the items you mention have been sidelined by the introduction of newer equipment. As to inside views, some manufacturers feel they infringe on proprietary information, so we use them only if supplied. We have to try and keep everyone happy.

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Hi-Ya!

Bam!

Ouch!

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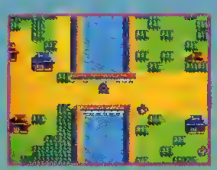
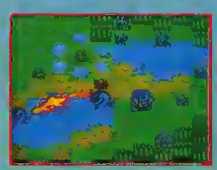


Zip off to new adventures

Race through dungeon mazes



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EG HOTLINE

Compiled by Joyce Worley

La Russa Joins Stormfront

Tony La Russa manager of the Oakland A s joined the board of d rectors of Stormfront Studios formerly Beyond Software La Russa collaborated with the company on the creation of SSI s **Tony La Russa Baseball** for the Genesis and EA s **Tony La Russa Baseball** (**I** & **II**) for PCs. Don Daglow president, said "We've worked closely with Tony La Russa for over two years so it was natural for us to ask him to join our board "

Daglow explained the recent name change "There were other software firms around the country called Beyond We bu id unique products so we felt we needed a unique name to go with them "

Coming: Games by Wire

n the most significant step n game marketing since they became available for home rental video games are going to cable TV

Next year gamers wi be able to download a game from their local cable systems if Sega and some partners have their way Plans to form The Sega Channel are in the works with a joint venture by Sega of America Time Warner Entertainment and Telecommunications nc (TCI) A special tuner decoder cartridge wi attach to the TV cable and plug into a Genesis Subscribers may then select from games identical to the cartridge versions previews tips news contests, promotions and other program materials al updated monthly

"The consumer gets an extraordinary value " said Tom Kal nske Sega s president and CEO "a well-stocked and constantly updated ibrary of games for a low monthly fee " TCI senior VP Larry Romrel noted the system wi use today's standard analog cable "without waiting for the new digital cable technologies "

Geoff Holmes Time Warner's senior vice president of technology said "With our partners we ntend to make The Sega Channel as much of a breakthrough in the nteractive video marketplace as HBO was in the early days of cable "

Clinton Meets SimCity Builders

Three student winners of Maxis' Future City contest showed President Bill Clinton a map and model of a town they created with **SimCity**, and presented him with a copy of **SimCity** for his daughter Chelsea. Matthew Smith, Emma Lincoln and Kevin Milans, seventh and eighth grade students of Tilden Middle School, Rockville, Md., also wrote an essay for the contest explaining the alternate energy sources used to power their city, Tilden Town, in the year 2010.

The national contest, part of National Engineers Week, awarded a $1000 grant for Tilden's math and science programs, IBM computers for the school, and the students received calculators and a choice of Maxis software.

Pres. Clinton studies a map of a winning SimCity design.

LucasArts Previews Two Adventures

LucasArts' latest graphic adventure **The Dig** MS-DOS) scheduled for autumn release is a deep space adventure for a shuttle crew that gets caught up in an a ien world when a booby-trapped asteroid threatens Earth

Sam and Max set out for adventure across the USA.

Designed by Brian "**Loom**" Moriarty it is said to evoke terror blood and guts and is definitely not a humorous game

Sam & Max Hit the Road MS-DOS features a doggie detective and his side-kick rabbit, n a search for Bigfoot.

Fu l-screen graphics and icon-driven nterface keep the fun moving on a road trip across the USA. Steve Purcel creator of the comic book series s the lead artist and creative director for the interactive game

TTI Intros Peripherals

Turbo Technologies announced it has completed development on The ntelligent Link for MS-DOS Macintosh and Amiga computers The Link lets the Turbo Duo act as a CD-ROM player when attached to the appropriate computer and the price wi be somewhere between $70 and $100

T T is also premiering a mouse for the Turbo Duo and other peripherals ike the Pad The Tap and a Cordless Pad

Crystal Dynamics Aims at 3DO

"We re going to set the standard for an entirely new gaming experience " said Judy Lange president of the newly formed Crysta Dynamics which wi dedicate itself to developing 32-Bit game titles concentrating on 3DO She went on to promise "unprecedented realism" and use of a "Hollywood approach " incorporating characters emotions

and persona ities and making use of the advanced graphic capabi ities of the 3DO

The first two titles wi be available this fal with 5 additional 3DO releases slated for 1994 **Crash 'N Burn** is a combat auto race through a post-holocaust world Real actors and actresses provide the opposition as the gamer selects a vehicle upgrades it with weapons and defenses and drives n one-player Rally and Tournament modes or two-player Demolition mode

Total Eclipse is a space fighting simulator that moves at 24 frames per second through texture-mapped polygon terrain and tunnels. Earthquakes volcanic activity waves and other catastrophes keep the terrain nteresting, and ive-action video footage makes briefings and award ceremonies dramatic Shape-shifting bosses appear at the end of each of the half-dozen or so levels

Both games feature 6 m ion pixels per second nstead of the m ion per second formerly standard) display up to 16 m l- ion colors on screen simultaneously and pause one second or less during access The 3-D worlds are made of texture-mapped polygons with full screen fu l-motion video Both racer and plane have a cloaking device thanks to 3DO s transparency technology

The company wi also introduce an action-strategy BM game this autumn, created by Toys For Bob (who also developed **Star Control**) Its name isn't final yet, but it has a comedy background and wi become a 3DO title next year

ICOM Will Join Viacom Family

n a move that further signifies the entry of big entertainment corporations nto the multimed a gam ng field Viacom nternational agreed to acquire Icom Simulations publishers of the **Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective** series for CD-ROM This series has done wel for ICOM and the company will probably add titles

Accord ng to Frank J Biond Jr president and CEO of Viacom nternational nc. Icom wil be ntegrated nto Viacom New Media a unit of Viacom Entertainment recently created to develop produce distribute and market interactive soft

ware Viacom s first products wi appear in 1994.

Other units of the parent company own and operate basic cable services MTV VH-1 Nickelodeon and Nick at Night, Showtime, the Movie Channel and a number of cable systems and broadcast ing stations.

Flashback:

Gourmet Controllers

In the earliest days of video gaming, the only controllers available were the ones that came with the machines. The Atari stick and paddles, the Odyssey hard-wired stick (replaced in later models with a detachable), and Intellivision's direction disk with key pad controlled the early contests.

Datasoft's **LeStick** was probably the first gourmet control specifically marketed for video games. It wasn't too successful when it was patented in 1981, but it did work with the Atari 2600, as well as Atari and Commodore computers.

The real excitement started when Wico, long-time manufacturer of controllers for coin-ops, and Suncom, a company in the VCR accessories business, came on the scene. Both companies showed gourmet sticks specifically designed for home games at the June 1982 Consumer Electronics Show. Ed Sokolfski, Wico President, recalled: "I remember that we introduced ours in the convention hall that year. Suncom did a launch at that show also, but they came in too late and couldn't get space in the hall, so they were on a boat down in the harbor. Ironically, Suncom later became part of Wico, so we were all in the same boat together."

Suncom's launch was very successful. The company's then-President Howard Leventhal was on The Kichigai in the Chicago harbor: "It went great. Suncom launched the SlikStik and the StarFighter, which was a cigar-shaped Atari/C-64 controller. They were so well accepted, we went on to market a complete line for all game systems."

Wico's **Red Ball Joystick** was such a big hit, it attracted a lot of attention to gourmet controllers. It actually was featured in an exploitation flick, *Joystick Girls*, as well as being the subject of a Lou Reed song, *My Red Joystick.*

The Turbo Pad is Suncom's latest gourmet video game controller.

These companies continue their commitment to video and computer gamers with new controllers being released each year.

The Battling Bar Codes

rwin Toy is test marketing **Bar Code Battler** a stand-alone game player developed by Epoch in Japan which had kids al over the sland Nation grabbing up bar codes off common household products to create warriors wizards etc.

The **Bar Code Battler** scans standard codes on everyday products then assigns factors to the coding to produce warriors wizards protectors weapons and other attributes. The gamer can then match the resulting heroes in statistical combat on the game mach ne n Japan the manufacture says the scavenger hunt to find the most powerfu codes made a certain brand of noodles the hottest sel ing food product n the market.

The Bar Code Battler should be available nationwide by the Holiday Season at approximately $45-$50

Origin Gets Eagle Designer

Andy Hol is one of the founding members of MicroProse and designer of **Strike Eagle III** joined the staff of Origin Systems He be avoiding flight projects for a while however Origin is working on a sports product currently and he wi join that team

Galen Svanas, spokesman for Origin expressed the company's pleasure at h ring Hol is. "It bodes wel for his career and our future products that he chose Origin There are so few people with the depth of experience that he brings to a product."

Jonny Quest Explores PC

Jonny Quest wi return with his father Race Haj Bandit and other characters from the popular an mated series in an RPG action-adventure for PCs/MS-DOS systems by Hollyware **Jonny Quest—The Splinter of Heaven** developed by Persage and scheduled for release n August, is being promoted jointly by Hollyware and Hanna-Barbera

Hanna-Barbera s boy adventurer made a comeback bid n a TV movie on the USA Net work this spring.

Jonny Quest returns in all-new adventures on a PC near you!

Double Dragon Invades TV

The video game is soon to be a syndicated series. Bohbot Communications Tradewest, and DIC Enterprises wi produce 13 half-hour episodes of **Double Dragon**, to be released later this year

The new animated show wi be part of the weekend *Amazin! Adventure*s block.

Power Modeler Adds Planes, Cars

Revell-Monogram who had the sneak hit of the Winter Consumer Electronic Show with their first entry n the Power Modeler ine of CD products, **European Racers** announced they wi extend the ine with two new programs **Hi-Tech Aircraft** lets the gamer build four model planes F-15 Strike Eagle Apache helicopter Stealth or F14A Tomcat) select a mission and fly The action is air-to-a r and surface-to-air combat for one or two gamers using movie footage

Muscle car maniacs build and drive cars in Revell's game.

Muscle Cars also has four on-screen models (Chevelle SS396 Malibu SS Pro Street, Boss 302 Mustang and Hemi Cuda) then lets the driver race on varied terrains against fi med competitors

Both CD-ROM products come with a model to assemble wh le watching the on-screen instructions

Turbo Touch Saves PC Thumbs

Triax Technologies wil market a Turbo Touch 360 for MS-DOS mach nes later this year The PC version of the controller origina ly ntroduced for Nintendo play is a four-button controller with the A&B buttons in normal positions and C&D buttons available for software which requ res them A slide switch activates turbo mode when the C&D buttons become turbo buttons for rapid fire

The Turbo Touch controller is said to elim nate numb thumbs with its diagonal and circular finger-tip controls

SF2 Breaks 16-Meg Barrier

America wi soon see the first SNES cartridge with more than 16-Megs when Capcom releases **Turbo Street Fighter 2 Championship Edition** in September The cart is expected to be 20 or 24-Megs

Meanwhile Capcom has delayed release of the Sega Genesis version of **SF2CE**, so that it wi coincide with the completion of **Turbo SF2CE.**

CES Accessories Giveaway

Portable gamers ucky enough to be able to go to the Summer Consumer Electronics Show n Chicago may have a chance to extend their luck if they stop by the NAKI accessories display and sign up for a drawing.

Among the dozen prizes to be awarded during the open house on Sunday wi be a Solar Pak recharger for the Game Boy a Turbo Twins play grip rechargeable battery pack for the Game Gear and two grand prizes of NAKI Master Paks each containing a number of accessories for the Game Boy or Game Gear

Shareware Award Nominees

Wolfenstein 3-D was nominated in three categories for the Shareware ndustry Awards ceremonies to be held June 19 in ndianapolis It is included in the Entertainment Software category of the Best of the Best: 11 Years of Shareware along with **Corncob 3D Maelstrom** and **Overkill**

It is also n the New Products 1992—Best New MS-DOS Software category as well as in the category covering Best New Home Hobby Entertainment, Education Software WIth **Wolfenstein** s incredible action and fast-paced game play these awards are deserved Other titles nominated for the latter group are **Corncob 3D Cross-stitch Designer Math Rescue** and **Overkill.**

Make a Video, Win a Prize

Aspiring video artists can use Binary Zoo's **Rock and Bach Studio** to create a better music video, and win up to $300 worth of Broderbund software. That's the prize for best overall video; $200 worth is the prize for best music composition, and $100 goes to the best video production.

The $59.95 educational and creative package, for 386 PC and sound card, includes sections on musical styles, keys, instrumentation and harmonic rhythms and patterns, and production capability for song composition, band assembly and video design.

The game is designed for ages 7 14, but there is no age limit on contestants, so adults can also enter

Submissions (one per person) must be received on a 3.5" floppy disk by September 30 at Best Video Contest, Binary Zoo Software, Inc., P.O. Box 3210 Champlain, NY 12919-3210.

Lightwave Enhances Game Sound

Stereo sound is now available to video gamers n places where it previously wasn't possible with two peripherals from Lightwave Technologies Both battery-powered units attach to the stereo outputs of a SNES Genesis or other item ke a portable CD player

Incredible stereo sound can be heard from these speakers.

If the game is connected to a TV without stereo capabi ity the $19 95 MicroSound system provides powered speakers that allow for full bass-boosted stereo sound

For use n quiet areas The Silent Zone is a $34.99 cordless remote stereo headphone system that uses the FM radio band rather than blockable infrared to transmit the stereo signa to the receiver unit. It wil also receive regular FM stations

Gravis Bundles Games, Cards

Air combat, winter sports and race driving take on extra d mension on PCs with special packages by Advanced Gravis that feature the company's 32-voice 16-Bit UltraSound cards. The Ultra Air Combat Pak ncludes Electronic Arts **Chuck Yeager's Air Combat**, Special UltraSound Edition and a Gravis Analog Pro joystick, for $249 A version without the joystick retails for $30 less as the UltraChuck Pak.

The Ultra Action Pak n-cludes two games from Accolade **Test Drive III The Passion** and **The Games: Winter Challenge** with the Gravis PC Game Pad

Top Video Games
As of April 12, 1993

The following figures are provided courtesy of Babbages.

Super NES
1. *Star Fox*, Nintendo
2. *Tecmo NBA Basketball*, Tecmo
3. *Street Fighter II* Capcom
4. *Tiny Toons*, Konam
5. *Super Mario Kart*, Nintendo
6. *Super Star Wars*, JVC
7. *Desert Strike*, Electronic Arts
8. *Super Strike Eagle* Microprose
9. *Zelda-Link to the Past*, Nintendo
10. *NCAA Basketball* N ntendo

Sega Genesis
1. *X-Men*, Sega
2. *Tony LaRussa Baseball* Electronic Arts
3. *Flashback*, US Gold
4. *NHLPA Hockey '93*, Electronic Arts
5. *Fatal Fury* Takara
6. *NBA All-Star Challenge*, Flying Edge
7. *HardBall III* Acco ade
8. *PGA Tour Golf II*, Electronic Arts
9. *Ecco the Dolphin*, Sega
10. *Road Rash* Electronic Arts

Game Boy
1. *Super Mario Land 2* Nintendo
2. *Super Mario Land*, N ntendo
3. *Kirby's Dream Land*, Nintendo
4. *NBA All Star Challenge 2* LJN
5. *Yoshi* N ntendo
6. *The Ren & Stimpy Show* THQ
7. *Tetris*, Nintendo
8. *Golf* Nintendo
9. *Dr Mario*, N ntendo
10. *Tiny Toon Adventures*, Konam

NES
1. *Tecmo NBA Basketball*, Tecmo
2. *Dragon Warrior IV* Enix
3. *Tecmo Super Bowl* Tecmo
4. *Black Bass Fishing*, Hot B
5. *Super Mario Bros. 2* Nintendo
6. *TMNT· The Manhattan Project*, Konami
7. *Tetris*, N ntendo
8. *Super Mario Bros. 3*, N ntendo
9. *Dr Mario*, Nintendo
10. *Zelda-Adventures of Link*, Nintendo

Sega Game Gear
1. *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, Sega
2. *Taz-Mania*, Sega
3. *Streets of Rage*, Sega
4. *The Majors. Pro Baseball* Sega
5. *Arch Rivals*, Flying Edge
6. *The Little Mermaid*, Sega
7. *Super Off Road*, Virgin
8. *Lemmings*, Sega
9. *Chakan*, Sega
10. *Batman Returns*, Sega

Sega CD
1. *Adventures of Willy Beamish* Sierra
2. *Road Avenger* Renovation
3. *Night Trap*, Sega
4. *Sewer Shark*, Sony magesoft
5. *Cobra Command*, Sega
6. *Hook*, Sony magesoft
7. *Black Hole Assault*, Big Net
8. *Wonder Dog*, JVC
9. *Prince of Persia*, Sega
10. *Wolf Child*, JVC

EG Readers' Popularity Poll
June 1993

These are the titles readers voted as their favorites in EG s monthly pol Duplicate numbers represent tie votes.

Favorite Video Games
1 *Street Fighter* Capcom
2. *Sonic the Hedgehog*, Sega
2 *Sonic 2* Sega
3. *Streets of Rage*, Sega

Favorite Computer Game
1 *King's Quest 5*, Sierra

Favorite Multimedia
1. *Night Trap*, Sega

Favorite Coin-Op
1. *Street Fighter II* Capcom
2 *Mortal Kombat*, Wi ams
3. *Wrestlefest*, Technos
3 *Terminator 2* Wi iams

Sega, Accolade Reach Accord

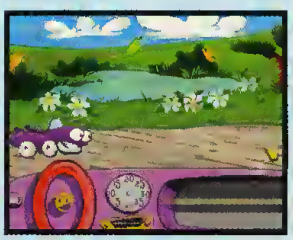
It's all settled: Sega and Accolade have reached an out-of-court agreement and put an end to their long litigation.

Under terms of the settlement, Accolade joined Sega's third-party license group, and is now fully authorized to produce licensed products for the Sega Genesis and Game Gear systems.

Free Adventures For Kids

Free interactive demos are available for **Putt-Putt Joins the Parade** and **Fatty BEAR's Birthday Surprise**, the first Junior Adventures titles from Humongous Entertainment.

Aimed at children 3-8, the games (and demos) are available for either MS-DOS systems or Macintosh. The demos may be obtained while supplies last by calling (206) 485-1212; they are also available for down-



loading from CompuServe, America On-Line or GEnie. While obviously not a complete game, the demos do allow users to feel their way through the scenario, to determine wether or not they would wish to purchase the entire program. Full sound is included in the demos, along with some interaction.

The complete games, which include 48-page Adventurer's Handbooks, are available on disk for $49.95 or CD-ROM for $59.95.

Top Software Sales
April 1993

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington D.C. based on units sold by ten retail chains, representing over 1300 stores.

TOP MS-DOS Games

1. *Space Quest V* Sierra
2. *Comanche. Maximum Overkill* Nova Logic
3. *Links 386 Pro*, Access
4. *Sim City* Maxis
5. *Ultima Underworld II* Origin
6. *HardBall III* Accolade
7. *Links—Mauna Kea*, Access
8. *Front Page Sports. Football* Sierra
9. *Falcon 3.0*, Spectrum Holobyte
10. *Silent Service II* MicroProse

Top CD-ROM Titles

1. *MPC Wizard*, Aris
2. *Mantis*, MicroProse
3. *Street Atlas USA*, Delorme
4. *Cinemania*, Microsoft
5. *Battle Chess*, nterplay
6. *Win CD*, MicroProse
7. *Wing Commander/Secret Missions 1&2*, Origin
8. *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* LucasArts
9. *World View* Aris
10. *Compton s Encyclopedia Upgrade* Compton s

Top Coin-Ops
May 1993

Figures courtesy of Replay Magazine based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *NBA Jam*, Wi iams
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Midway
3. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konam
4. *Street Fghter II'CE*, Capcom
5. *Super Chase* Taito
6. *Terminator 2*, Midway
7. *Sunset Riders*, Konam
8. *Golden Axe II* Sega
9. *Final Lap 3*, Namco
10. *Turbo Out Run* Sega

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Virtua Racing*, Sega
2. *Suzuka 8 Hours*, Namco
3. *Stadium Cross*, Sega
4. *Grand Prix Star* Jaleco
5. *X-Men*, Konam
6. *Steel Talons*, Atari
7. *Mad Dog II* ALG
8. *Exhaust Note* Sega
9. *Four Trax*, Atari
10. *Final Lap 2* Namco

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *3 Count Bout*, SNK
2. *Street Fighter 'CE Turbo*, Capcom
3. *Time Killers*, Strata
4. *Warriors of Fate*, Capcom
5. *World Heroes 2* SNK
6. *Neck N Neck*, Bundra
7. *Fatal Fury 2* SNK
8. *World Heroes*, SNK
9. *Irem Skins*, rem
10. *Super Sidekicks*, SNK

Best Pinball Machines

1. *Twilight Zone*, Wil iams
2. *Street Fighter I* Gott./Prem
3. *Addams Family* Midway
4. *Creature/Lagoon*, Midway
5. *Rocky & Bullwinkle*, Data East
6. *White Water* Wi iams
7. *Dracula*, Wi iams
8. *Star Wars*, Data East
9. *Terminator 2* Wi iams
10. *Fish Tales*, Wi iams

Beatles Sing On Compton's CD

The Complete Beatles, both the rockumentary film and the book of that title are combined on CD-ROMs for both PC Windows and Macintosh by Compton s NewMedia

Due in late summer the $99 95 two-disc sets cover the history of the sem nal rock group over two periods 1956-1964 and 1965-1969 The music comprises the same edited versions of 66 songs that appeared n the fi m

The Fab Four hit CD-ROM in Compton's latest release.

GamePad Arrives For Mac

Macintosh gamers can use a video game style controller to play virtually al programs that provide keyboard control thanks to Advanced Gravis

The Canadian maker of PC game controllers and audio products has added the Mac GamePad to its ne as a follow-up to the MouseStick Its thumbpad operates ke a mouse for point-and-click games or for multi-d rectional control for keyboard-only games It has four fire buttons that provide single-shot or turbo fire and its Fl p feature accommodates right-or-left hand players This controller is sure to be a hit with anyone who kes the feel of the video game-style controllers and wants to use them on the Mac

Mac owners can now use the familiar video-style controllers.

Capcom Controls Genesis SF2

Capcom USA has a Genesis compatible version of the Fighter Power Stick especially designed for use with **Street Fighter II Champion Edition.**

The controller has an 8-way joystick and six action buttons with three turbo buttons allowing for variable speed control. Resembling the Nintendo version released last year, the unit retails for $80 or less.

SNES Plays Beethoven's 2nd

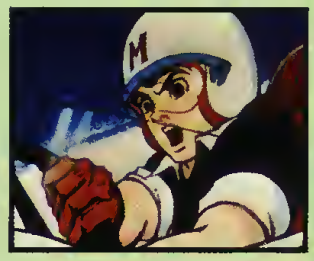
Riedel Software Productions (RSP) and Hi-Tech Expressions have started work on a SNES game based on *Beethoven's 2nd*, the movie sequel scheduled for release in the 1993 holiday season. The game will follow the movie's plot line about a Saint Bernard who must defend his sweetheart and four puppies.

"A really great feature of the game is that the child controls Beethoven," said Vince Desiderio, vice president and co-founder of RSP. The player moves Beethoven through the four worlds of this side-scrolling platform game, rescuing a puppy in each world.

Accolade Signs Speed Racer

Speed Racer, the resourceful teenage driver of the Mach 5 race car, returns to the small screen in a variety of formats this year and early in 1994.

With the signing of a licensing agreement between Accolade and Speed Racer Enterprises, Accolade will develop games based on the classic animated series for the Genesis and DOS systems



for release this year, and for the SNES early next year. All the familiar characters will appear, but the main element will be race driving. Gamers can expect to see and experience the same thrills Speed encounters when going up against his crafty enemies.

In addition, Accolade will develop a series of games based on a new series, *The New Adventures of Speed Racer*, scheduled to air in syndication this fall.

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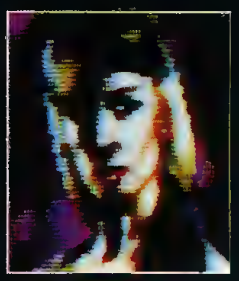
SUB-ZERO

LIU KANG

JOHNNY CAGE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SEPTEMBER 93

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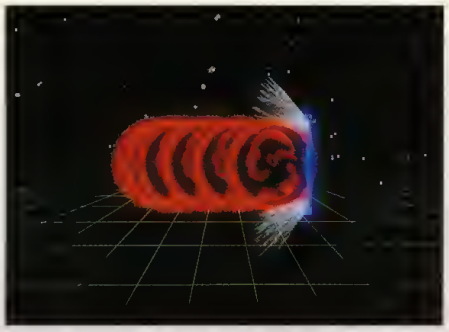


INSERT COIN HERE

Getting a Fighting Chance

by Jay Carter

When historians look back at the world of coin-op during the early 1990s, one of the defining highlights of the video game art form will undoubtedly focus on fighting/martial arts themes. Despite all the anticipation of virtual reality and more fully experiential creations that loom large for the duration of this decade, the backbone of the industry remains in what used to be called your basic "kick/punch" format.

For those growing up in the Fifties, heroic figures roamed the wild west including Johnny Mack Brown, Hopalong Cassidy, many others too numerous to mention and, yes, Roy Rogers and Gene Autry in their Saturday and Sunday morning serials. But then came a new generation fascinated by the exploits and physical daring of Bruce Lee and all those who have followed, such as Chuck Norris, Jean Claude Van Damme and Steven Seagal.

Whether it was *Enter The Dragon* or *The Karate Kid*, the martial arts developed an allure and, now, there is an emergence of more children, as well as adults, who are participating on a regular basis to move ahead, from the forms of white belt status on up to black belt artistry.

So, maybe, it's no wonder that there has been a transference of sorts into coin-op entertainment where contemporary trends are brought to our waiting fingertips. Less than a decade ago, **Double Dragon** captured the fancy of video game players. More recently, **Street Fighter II CE**, as well as **Mortal Kombat**, have generated their own legends as we await the upcoming sequels and demand more fighting games to tempt our skills and the use of multi-button/joystick configurations.

Anyway, since demand continues to increase by players looking for the next great battle ground, along with the desire of many manufacturers to showcase their own abilities at creating a fighting game masterpiece, all of us need to get ready for even more videos that feature their own subtleties and nuances to this very familiar theme.

Want to unlock the secrets of the martial arts? McO'River hopes so with the introduction of **Tao Taido**. Set in the Amazon Forest, there are eight different characters to choose from, including Harry or Miku, each with their own special array of tactics. Controls are via an eight-way joystick and three action buttons in what is a best two-out-of-three contest for a chance to take on the ultimate Tao master. Also following along the same battle lines is **Fighter's History** from Data East, which features six action buttons and joystick controls for a mesmerizing array of combination moves. With distinct backdrops that include Washington D.C., China and the dojos of Japan, there are nine different tournament competitors to choose from. It's an international cast of characters led by USA's own martial arts expert, Ray McGall; Kano Ryoko, the Japanese judo master; France's Jean Pierre and Samohay Tomyamkun from Thailand. In addition, as players advance, **Fighter's History** also throws in two 'boss-monster' type combatants to spice up the action.

American Technos hopes that the **Shadow Force** will be with you as they present an imaginative story line that might have the Cyborg Ninja going up against the likes of the one and only Dr. Wong. What is unique here, above and beyond the mixing of human warriors and dastardly creatures with

their own ninja techniques, is that characters can transform into totally new and more powerful beings during battle. In fact, the combinations and permutations seem almost endless from one stage of play to the next.

Utilizing their own dazzling System 32 graphics capabilities, Sega brings us their vision of the 25th Century with the release of **Dark Edge**. The plot involves six different warriors and a final confrontation against a computer-generated villain through eight stages of play. Using a joystick and five action buttons, you can select from Thud, an American with a Samurai spirit; the power-suited Goliath; the genetically mutated Blood who not only has elastic nails and sharp fins, but also spits out a poisonous liquid; or Genie, the martial arts femme fatale.

Rounding out this overview of current fighting games is Konami's latest called **Martial Champion** where, once again, we find another tournament taking place in such diverse sites as the forests of China, Africa and the rooftops of France. This time around ten competitors have assembled to strut their stuff in determining the best of the best. You'll have a joystick and three buttons for upper, middle and lower attacking moves and a cast that includes Hoi, the son of a Kung Fu master who thinks he's immortal; Goldar, a veteran of aikido who's deadly with nunchukas; Rachael, a Nisei who has trained since childhood to be a ninja; and the eccentric ex-Kabuki actor, Zen.

Needless to say, although fighting may seem to dominate the scene, coin-op manufacturers have not forsaken other game themes, as evidenced by the thoroughbred trappings and ticket dispensing features of **Neck-N-Neck** from Bundra Games. Designed for up to six players to compete, the objective of this horse race is to accurately time one button pushing so that your entry can jump over obstacles and speed down the track to the finish line. The action is fast and furious with the chance to win tickets based not just on where you place, but also the time it takes you to complete the race.

Shooting games have long been classic attractions at many family amusement centers and Namco has brought back, and updated, something to set your sites on. **Shoot Away II** is a big screen, two-player skeet shooting contest that incorporates state-of-the-art fiber optics for registering all your hits and any of your misses. There are three different difficulty levels for the Novice, Amateur or Expert and varying clay pigeon target speeds that will satisfy any sharpshooter.

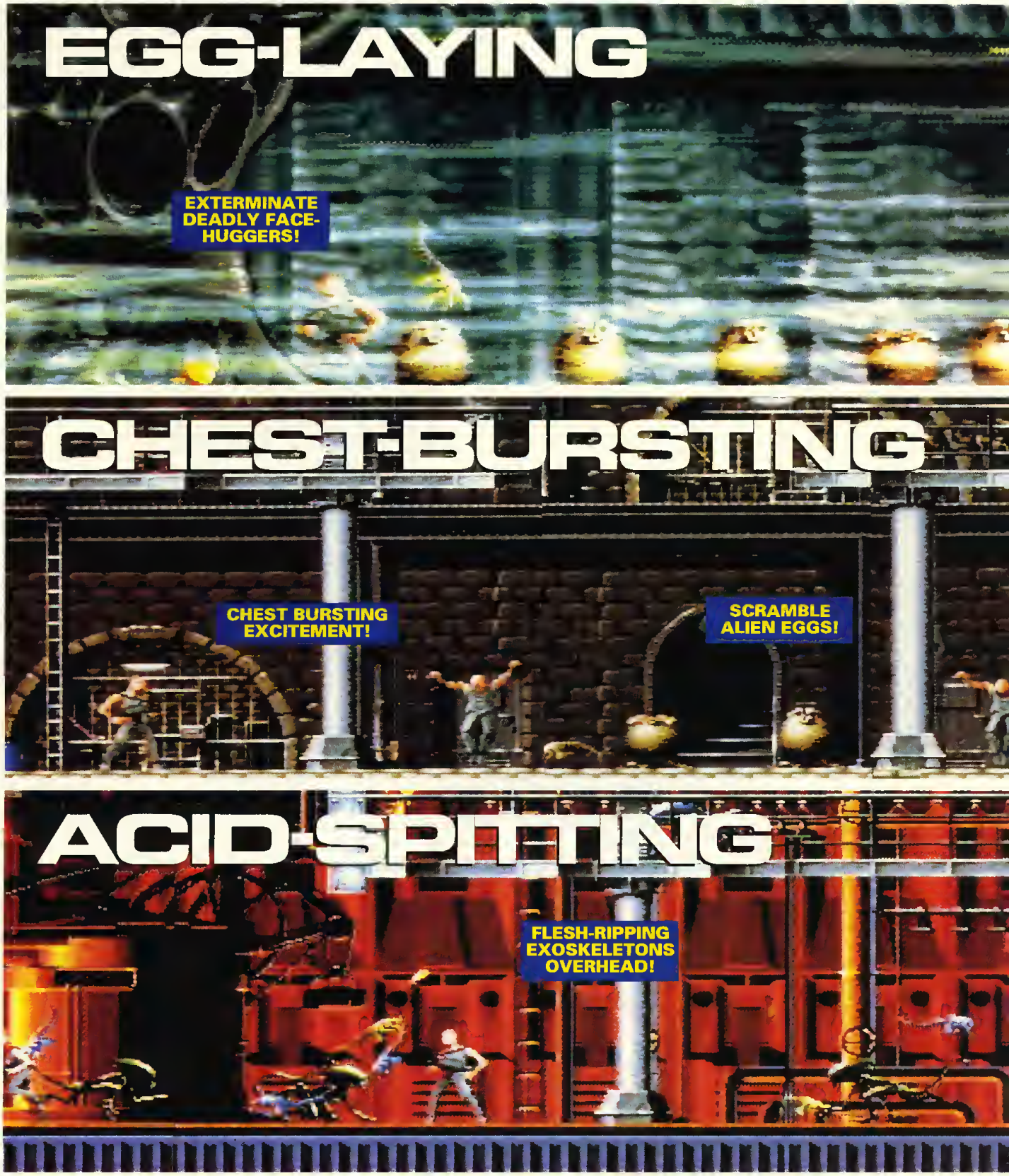
Take to the skies in a two-player dogfight with Jaleco's newest **Wild Pilot**. Man the controls and your machine guns in a rockin' and rollin' quest to wipe out the criminal gang known as the Manglers. There are ten different adversaries, all wanted by the police, that you have to bring to justice, from the trigger happy Shot-gun Jones to Scary Mary Vixen, Morris Browning the underworld boss and Diamond Gordon the cat burglar and jewel thief. Although you might find it as an upright, the real experience of **Wild Pilot** is in its sit-down moving cabinet design.

And last, but not least, for fans of pinball machines, Bally is ready to put you into a new zone with a game that delivers a pinball that really isn't a pinball, a clock that isn't really a clock and flippers that aren't flippers. If this might sound confusing, it makes perfect sense in **The Twilight Zone**, which is the latest effort from the same design team that brought pinball wizards **The Addams Family** and **Funhouse**.

Introduced as an all-new Superpin, **The Twilight Zone** does unlock a door with the key of imagination thanks to the use of a white Power Ball that's different from any pinball you've ever encountered, a mini-playfield area where Magna-Flip invisible flippers let you Battle The Power for increased scoring, and a clock that can create chaos as well as score millions of points.

Throughout a journey where you'll pick up hitchhikers, spin a slot machine, set off a player piano and load an actual gumball machine that's on the playfield, **The Twilight Zone** offers an amazing array of features including a Lost In The Zone mode of continuous six-ball, multi-ball play that has to be experienced to be believed. It is rare that a pinball goes this crazy!

As summer heats up, so will coin-op, bringing us tantalizing attractions that appeal to all game players. Until next time, keep on playing and have fun.



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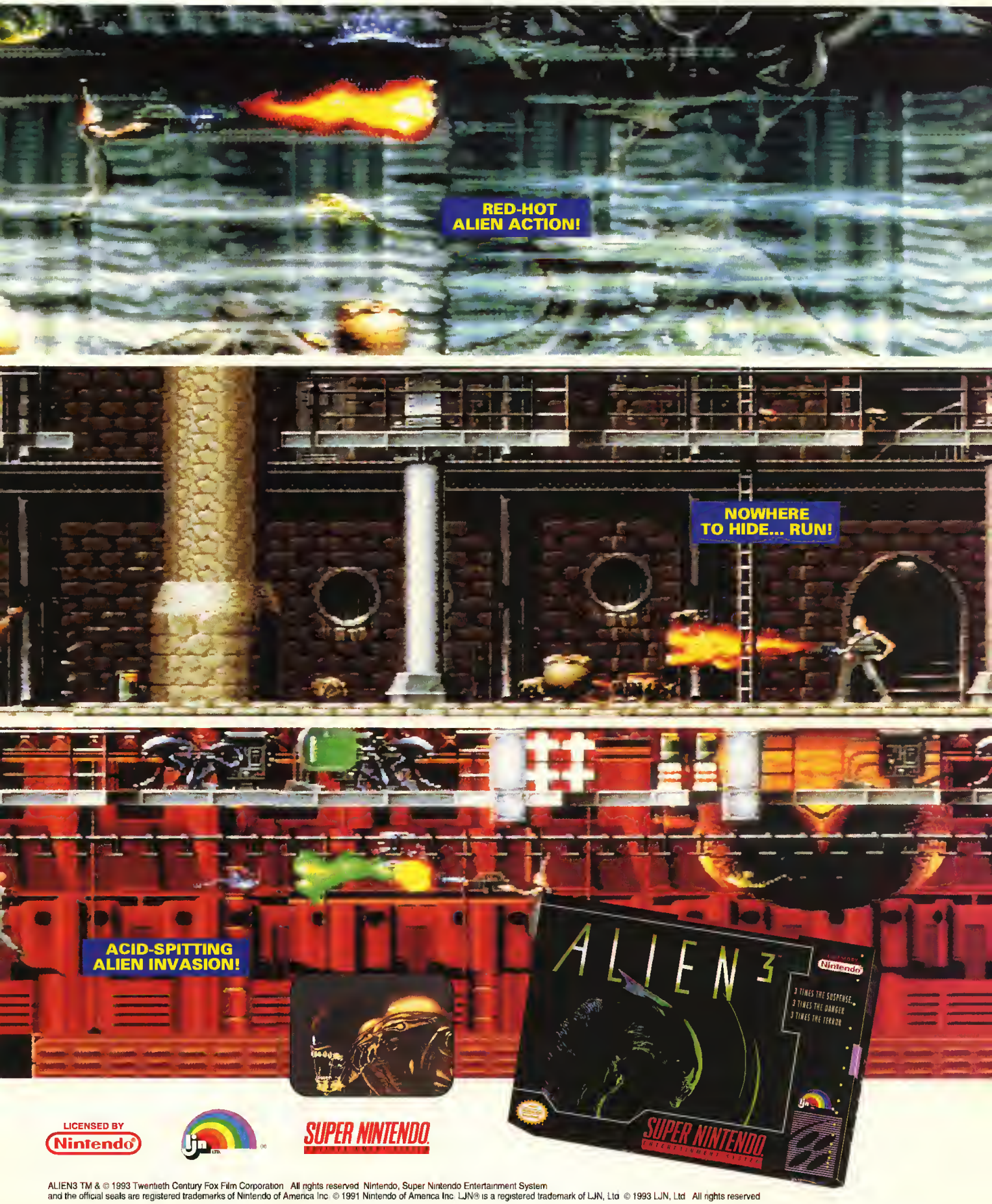

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SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

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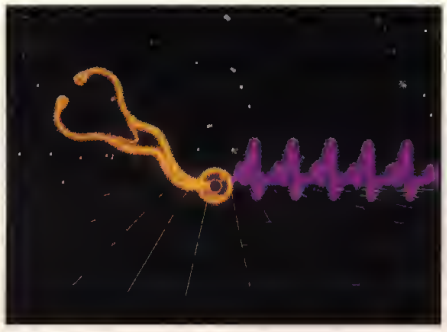

GAME DOCTOR

Qs, As & Video Games

by The Game Doctor

It's that time again, gamers, and we've got so many questions this time around we'd better get right to it:

Q: I have two questions for you: 1) Where did the term "Easter Egg" originate? And 2) I have a few dust particles *under* my Lynx screen. Any suggestions on how to get them out?

Keary Ingrum Jr.
Cocoa, FL

A: *I have two answers for you, Keary. The term "Easter Egg" was born when an early Atari 2600 programmer secreted his initials ("HW") in the game* ***Adventure****. Even Atari didn't know he had done this until it was too late and, at first, the Sunnyvale game moguls were extremely unhappy. But the reaction to the "hidden message" among gamers and the magazines of that period was so favorable, Atari did a turnabout and began installing what they called "Easter Eggs" (because they were hidden treats) in many of its games.*

As for that dusty Lynx (Dusty Lynx? Didn't he used to play second base for the Boston Red Sox?), I have a theory: if the dust got in there, you should be able to get it out. I'd recommend using one of those tiny vacuums which are used to clean out computer keyboards and other small objects and running it around the edge of the screen. The dust probably got in through a break in the seal around the edges of the plexiglass.

And speaking of the Lynx, here's an interesting piece of commentary from an EG reader:

Q: I am the owner of an Atari Lynx. I bought the system because of its superior graphics and potential. Last month I asked a salesman at Toys 'R' Us why there haven't been any new Lynx titles released in months. He told me that Atari has begun phasing out the Lynx. Whether this is true or not, I feel let down.

Ever since Atari lost its corner on the market in the early '80s, they've thrown every new system on the ash heap if it doesn't take off right away. They should stick by their systems with software support and advertising. I have heard plenty of people express interest in buying a Lynx over the years. But without publicity to remind them, these potential buyers turned elsewhere. Game Gear didn't blast off right away either, but Sega stuck by it and it's now a success. If Atari threw more resources into an aggressive advertising campaign, it could once again be a lucrative competitor in the video game industry.

Perhaps it's time for a shakeup in the marketing division. God knows they need some visionaries that are more than just bean counters. Atari's fans and its legacy deserve better than this.

Bryant Clauson
Reno, NV

A: *You make some good points, Bryant, and as a major fan of the Lynx system I agree with much of what you say. Atari has definitely been too quick to pull the plug on projects that don't go through the roof immediately. But let me play devil's advocate for a moment.*

Actually, Atari itself has been satisfactory in supporting its system with quality software. The Game Gear is great, but I spend a lot more time playing Lynx games because, as of this moment, the Lynx stuff is better. The real problem is a lack of system sales which has kept third party publishers out of the ballgame.

It's true that the Game Gear was a slow starter, but its success was largely a by-product of Sega's fantastic fourth quarter '92 ad campaign. Also, Sega has the advantage of a successful mass market system (the Genesis) which generates hit titles which can then be converted to the GG format.

It will be a genuine shame if the Lynx falls by the wayside, and it has seemed, at times, as if Atari was waffling on whether to fish or cut bait.

Q: **EG** is excellent and yours is the first column I turn to! I love the "techie" stuff! A couple of Quickies: does 3DO plan on having a Virtual Reality peripheral? Also, whatever happened to Atari's 64-Bit Jaguar gaming system? Does **EG** plan on doing a feature/update on this exciting development?

Cary Groneveldt
New York, NY

A: *So far, 3DO has made no formal announcement regarding a VR peripheral, but since the entire electronic gaming scene is so jazzed on this technology, I would be surprised if such an add-on were not in the planning stages.*

As for the Jag, it is moving toward completion and will certainly be covered here upon its hopefully imminent release (originally scheduled for this summer). The system uses a 64-Bit RISC-based processor and many industry insiders are already raving about its sound and graphics technology. The most interesting thing about the Jaguar, however, could be its price. Although originally slated to retail at around a hundred bucks, the price is likely to be at least twice that by the time it reaches market. The Jaguar will not be a CD-based system, though a CD peripheral seems inevitable.

Still, even $200 is a lot cheaper than the prices being bandied about for the 3DO and Pioneer's LaserActive (probably around $700). The big question seems to be: can any product succeed in the marketplace with the Atari name behind it? Other potential problems: will the big-name third-party publishers support the system, and will a cartridge-based game player seem old-fashioned in the Age of CD?

We'll keep our collective fingers crossed. Meanwhile, follow the exploits of the Jaguar in ***EG****'s news section.*

Q: What, exactly, is the Super FX microchip? What does it do? Is the SNES really the first system to use it? Does SNES plan on using it again? Finally, do other systems plan on using it?

Imani X
Newark, CA

A: *The Super FX microchip was developed for Nintendo by Argonaut Software, a London developer, with funding from the big N. The purpose of the chip: to allow the SNES to run 3-D, polygon-type games such as the premiere cartridge,* ***StarFox*** *(which I incorrectly called "Solar Fox" in a recent issue; mea culpa). Although it will certainly be used in future games, at the moment, Nintendo is keeping it proprietary, so you won't even see it on third-party SNES software, much less on other systems.*

Q: Give me a break. **Street Fighter 2** is a good game but collector coins, t-shirts, a movie in development and a possible cartoon? This is crazy. What is your opinion on all of this? Do you think it is time to move on to a different game? Or is this going to become a time honored classic?

Matt Hester
Lafayette, IN

A: *You bring up an interesting point, Matt. The* ***SFII*** *craze sort of breaks tradition with past landmark electronic games in that it is not especially original.* ***Pong***, ***Space Invaders***, ***Pac-Man***, *the* ***Mario*** *games,* ***Tetris*** *and most of the other mega-hits of the past represented a major innovation. Instead,* ***SFII*** *seems to be an example of the right game in the right place at the right time. Certainly there were other games of this type long before* ***SFII*** *emerged (including the original* ***SF****), though none were as well executed. As to whether it will retain its classic status through the mists of time, I suspect it will not.*

By the way, have they done a ***SFII*** *collector's plate yet?*

Q: Explain to me exactly what "3-D" graphics and/or effects are and how each 16-Bit system utilizes them?

Jonathan Avery
Kansas City, MO

A: *The term "3-D" graphics refers to a simulation of depth. Most side-scrolling games, for example, are essentially two-dimensional, i.e., they deal in height and width. Many techniques have been employed to simulate depth in electronic games, though the best require the user to wear some sort of optical equipment. Human beings perceive depth because we see out of two eyes, spaced an equal distance from our nose. Because each eye sees an image from a slightly different position, we can gauge distance. The best 3-D video or computer game system ever produced was Sega's elaborate SMS peripheral which provided users with glasses which plugged directly into the system through the game card slot. Both lenses in these glasses were equipped with shutters, which opened and closed at precisely timed intervals, allowing the player to believe they were looking into, rather than merely at, the monitor screen.*

None of the existing 16-Bit systems has a 3-D peripheral, though Sega is preparing a Virtual Reality headpiece for the Genesis. Instead, these systems use superior graphics and built-in hardware tricks to simulate depth in their games. The SNES, for example, uses scaling, which makes on-screen characters larger or smaller depending on their on-screen position, while the SFX chip produces an even more elaborate illusion of depth. The Genesis, meanwhile, uses parallax scrolling, a feature through which different background elements can be timed to scroll at different speeds. The closer a layer of background is to the foreground, the faster it scrolls, while background objects scroll more slowly. These are just a few of the 3-D tricks games use.

Q: On a whim I recently purchased a copy of **EG** and must admit that even though it appears to be geared toward a younger generation, I found myself in fitting company. I'm 29, a college student, mother of two young boys, and also a computer game nut. I thoroughly enjoyed your Q&A column, and I have a question for you myself.

I purchased the game **Dark Heart of Uukrul**, released by Broderbund Software in 1990. However, the game itself was written by various individuals located in New Zealand—Digital Studios, Ltd. I've run into a complete brick wall after countless hours of defeating monsters and increasing spell power.

I contacted Broderbund (even spoke to the president's office!) and no one knows just where Digital Studios Ltd. is!!! Can you believe it? They were, however, kind enough to send me the game hints and puzzle explanations. Unfortunately, that still didn't help much as I'm still stuck at the same position.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could provide assistance in my quest to locate Digital Studios and/or some of the original writers of the game. The names listed in the handbook are: Ian Boswell, Martin Buis, Mark Butler, and Jean-Francois Pirus.

Regina McAnally
Tucson, AZ

A: *Regarding the comments in your first paragraph,* ***EG*** *is not actually geared at young gamers; it is intended for serious electronic gaming hobbyists of all ages. We try to take a somewhat more sophisticated, analytical approach to the field with the idea being that we don't write for video game, computer, portable, or coin-op players exclusively.* ***EG*** *is about the hobby of electronic gaming, which encompasses all aspects of plugged-in or battery-operated entertainment.*

As to your search for Digital Studios, the fact that Broderbund couldn't locate them leads me to assume that this development house is no longer in business and its various members have scattered throughout New Zealand like dandelion seeds. Therefore, we shall exploit the wide reach of ***Electronic Games*** *magazine and put out a call to the entire industry: where are these people!? Hunt them down and deliver them up to us (and, through us, to Regina) for inquisition!*

Q&A Quickies: Billy Broske of Richmond, VA, is a White Sox fan who wants to know if Frank Thomas has been signed up by a game company to front for a hardball simulation. Sorry to disappoint the millions of Frank Thomas fans out there in gamedom, but I don't think he has sufficient name recognition at this point in his career. Of course, considering some of the people Sega has signed in the past, you never know... Joe Aiello of Queens, NY, wants to know if the Lucasfilm computer game **X-Wing** is coming to the Genesis. There's no word on this yet, Joe, but you can look for JVC's **Rebel Assault** coming to the Sega CD and **Super Empire Strikes Back** winging toward the SNES. Both of these "Star Wars" based games from LucasArts are due around the holidays...

All of which wraps us up for this outing. Remember, send those cards and letters to:

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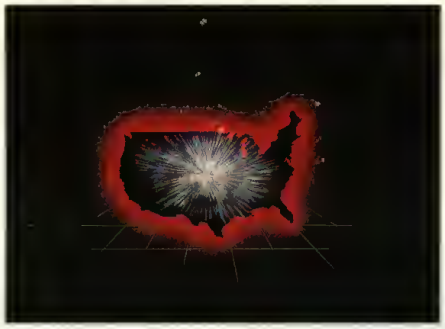

FANDOM CENTRAL

Fanzines and Freedom

by Arnie Katz

Major issues seldom cloud the sunny skies of electronic gaming fandom. There's one which I think does need to be raised. It's the importance of freedom of speech and the press, and the obligations that these freedoms entail.

America's founding fathers, who gave everything so that we could enjoy Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press, would be proud of electronic gaming fandom if they were with us today. The cornerstone of the hobby is the right of every fan of video, computer, multimedia, coin-op, and portable games to present opinions without interference from anyone else.

If there's one thing fanzines have no shortage of, it's opinions. For me, it's the diversity of outlook that makes it such an absorbing and entertaining hobby.

As anyone who has sent away for a few 'zines through this column knows, the ranks of fanzine editors include a lot of teenagers. In their enthusiasm, the younger faneds occasionally forget the line between opinion and libel or speak of hypotheses as facts.

Such transgressions are seldom malicious. In general, they should probably be viewed as youthful excesses. Older fans need to gently point out such mistakes, and we should then hope and expect that the perpetrators will research laws about printed expression before wading into treacherous waters.

There are companies in the electronic gaming industry that file lawsuits as nonchalantly as the rest of us send out Christmas cards. Let's hope that they understand the difference between a corporate competitor and a 15-year-old who gets a little over-excited in his fanzine editorial.

The greatest enemy of freedom of the press in fandom is intolerance. Everyone has favorite systems and games, but it is ridiculous to attack other fans just because they want to express those preferences.

If you have a SNES, it doesn't make every fan with a Genesis your mortal enemy. Fans should seek to mark out common ground with the rest of the hobby, not look for artificial divisions. Personally, I could never root for one gang of capitalists against another, but at least let's keep such partisanship from turning potential friends into enemies.

Freedom only works if everyone has the same rights. Most, though not all, fans acknowledge this.

I've recently discovered one or two fans who have no room for anyone's ideas but their own. At least two have become infamous for writing hate letters to fans who have the temerity to hold their own opinions. I call on fandom, and my colleagues in the professional ranks, to disavow those fans so that prospective fans can see that fandom rejects such disgusting bigots.

Fortunately, these people are untypical of the hobby as a whole. Let's look at a few of the many highly enjoyable fanzines that arrived this month...

The Guru #1

Edited by Brian Goss
6565 Spencer Hwy, Apt. 3003
Pasadena, TX 77505
Quarterly, $5/4 issues. 16 pages

This fanzine is so intelligently conceived and attractively produced that the only real clue that it's Brian's first effort is the issue number on the cover. I'd expect a lot of improvement in the future, but **The Guru #1** is a great start!

The only thing better than a good premiere issue is when the same zine introduces a whole crew of enthusiastic neofans. Besides Brian, **The Guru** presents a trio of promising staff editors: Chris Vasquez, Kraig Kujawa, and Patrick Wilson. All try their hand at reviewing, and Pat Wilson doubles as the zine's artist. Fan artists are a rare commodity in electronic gaming fandom to this point, so the introduction of a talented new illustrator is an event. I hope Patrick will find time to draw for a few other titles, too.

Games for the SNES get the bulk of the reviewing space, though there's also arcade and Amiga material. Brian is looking for writers to provide Genesis coverage. **The Guru** prints fairly lengthy reviews of Japanese products and the latest U.S. releases. There's a good chance you'll see games covered here that even the prozines won't touch for a few more months.

Of special interest to me was Brian's survey of the professional magazines. I appreciated his praise all the more, because his criticisms of the early issues are on target. I hope he'll continue to study the newsstand mags. I'd also like to see him apply that sharp eye to evaluating fanzines.

The Guru is off to a flying start, and Brian seems like an editor who won't hesitate to make improvements. It's my favorite new fanzine of the month, and definitely worth a trial subscription.

New World News #13

Edited by James Thomas
13819 Town Way Dr.
Sugarland, TX 77478
Frequent, $2.50 per issue, 34 pages

A full-color cover by the editor leads off the first issue in this zine's fourth volume. James and his friends cover the Neo•Geo, a system that seldom gets much ink in the prozines. This light-hearted, yet authoritative, fanzine is a good way for Neo•Geo owners to get a lot of worthwhile information about their favorite game machine.

The big story in this issue is the amusement arcade debut of **Fatal Fury 2**, the hottest fighting game for this platform so far. James contributes a review and strategy guide and promises a preview or review in the next issue.

NWN has an especially large fanzine review section. He's not the most stringent reviewer, but he gives each zine a very thorough analysis. This column

could develop into one of **NWN**'s real strengths in future issues if Hames continues to devote major space like this.

Another thing I like about this fanzine is that the editor is not afraid to inject some humor. I wish he'd lengthen his editorial, which is a fairly utilitarian welcome to the readers this time.

The Atari Zone Vol. 5 No. 2

Edited by Daniel M. Iacovelli
1411 N. 36th
Melrose Park, IL 60160-2726
Bi-monthly, $4.25/year, 12 pages

This fanzine, the official organ of the Atari Video Club (AVC) aims at monthly publication, but it hasn't quite hit that schedule recently. No matter. If you are into Atari video game systems old and new, it's easily worth the $4.25 to insure that you get Daniel's informative publication. I'm not too familiar with all the other membership activities the AVC offers, but its newsletter amply justifies the fee.

This issue, like its predecessors, has news, reviews, commentary, and previews. There's also a classified section that could prove useful for tracking down copies of those long-ago classic cartridges.

One activity likely to appeal to readers is a challenge tournament involving all-time greats like Activision's **Stampede** for the 2600. An article in this issue gives full particulars. Other highlights are an examination of **Robotron 2080** for the 7800, a long letters forum, and Sheri Levitt's column of Lynx hints. Incidently, Sheri is one of the few female fans currently contributing to fandom. This seems strange, because women are heavily represented in other corners of the amateur publishing world. Maybe we electronic gaming fans need to make a little more effort to bring women into fandom.

The graphics are utilitarian. It's all readable, though it might be time to reformat the publication to use space more efficiently and set articles off from each other in a more distinctive manner.

The Atari Zone is one of fandom's oldest titles. The still-enthusiastic Iacovelli knows how to please Atari fanatics.

Concordant Opposition #1

Edited by Jeff Bogumil
187 N. State Rte 2, Apt.B-201, New Martinsville, WV 26155-1631
Bimonthly, $1.25 per issue, 16 pages

Putting out a fanzine is fun, but no one ever promised it would be easy. Jeff bemoans first-issue foul-ups several times in **Concordant Opposition**.

His agitation is understandable, but Jeff is really too hard on himself This is a very good inaugural. If it isn't everything its 20-year-old editor would like it to be **Concordant Opposition** is entertaining and informative. Experience will help Jeff overcome existing flaws in future issues.

Tightly focused opinion pieces spice up the contents quite a bit. You may not agree with Jeff's positions on eight-bit gaming, legal action in the electronic gaming industry and the rental market, but they sure do make fascinating reading! If the second issue doesn't have a red-hot letter column with this kind of thought-provoking fuel, it'll be a shocker.

Most of the material bears directly on games, but Jeff's zine also makes room for articles and columns related to fandom itself. Such "fannish" content is sometimes a little mystifying to first-time readers, but it also gives the hobby a lot of its richness. The ribbing Jeff gives well known fan Noah Dziobecki in the introduction, a profile of the popular faned, is an effective set-up for the biography.

It's never wise to judge the quality of a fanzine by its first issue, because the best editors improve zine after zine. To my mind, though, the trivial flaws in this fanzine shouldn't obscure its high potential. I expect **Concordant Opposition** to grow and prosper, and it's not too early to jump on the fandwagon and subscribe.

Portable Gameplay #2

Edited by Mike Burch
1000 E. State St., Lehi, UT 84043
Bi-monthly, $2 per issue, 17 pages

Special interest fanzines like this one, which covers portable electronic gaming systems, are often the most interesting of the more serious amateur publications. The dedication and expertise of a faned like Mike is very impressive. Anyone into hand-helds is bound to learn a lot and find kindred spirits in **Portable Gameplay**.

Besides a large review section, Mike introduces an innovative idea he calls "Trendz." Using reader response, he hopes to generate stock market-like charts of the ups and downs in popularity of major games on portable systems. His results should tell much about the duration of a game's prime life. I fear the analogy to the stock market is wide of the mark, though. I think games are more like books, videos, and CDs. A game is released, rises as high as it deserves and then sinks back until newer titles force it off the list entirely. Mike's study should tell us which view is more accurate.

The second issue of **Portable Gameplay** is much better than the first. The overall layout and editorial content has been carefully considered, and is vastly improved. Subsequent issues will more than likely continue this upward trend. Mike already has plans to enhance it further, so I'd recommend portable fans check out this one soon

The Videogame Trader

Edited by Tim Duarte
P.O. Box N664
Westport, MA 02790-0606
Semi-Monthly, $6/six issues, 4 pages

Here's a good example of what one fan can accomplish. Tim Duarte, drawing on his experience as editor of the **2600 Connection**, decided that fandom needed a central marketplace. He created **The Videogame Trader** to fill that need.

This fanzine is indispensible to the serious video game cartridge collector. Anyone who wants to buy, sell, or trade is unlikely to find a better bargain than a classified ad in **The Videogame Trader.**

This 'zine is helpful to aficionados of the old school of video gaming, in that in can refresh memories of great games gone by. It's actually pleasurable just to scan the various pages and reminisce about some of the games that we all used to play in the early days of electronic gaming. Tim is doing a marvelous job, and fans are taking notice. The ad count is rising, and it won't be long before Tim adds another sheet to handle the volume.

A trial subscription, which comes with a free 50-word ad, is a good investment.

That's all the space we have this month. I hope those whose fanzines didn't squeeze in will understand that there just isn't enough room to review every issue of every zine.

One point I try to make every couple of months: If you care enough to do a fanzine, care enough to put your name and address on it prominently. I've had to reject several 'zines for inclusion in this column, because I didn't know where to tell folks to send for them. A colophon takes so little space, it's a shame to sabotage your fanzine by forgetting to include one. After all, it's your work, and you should get the credit!

Attention fanzine editors: If you want your fanzine covered in *Fandom Central*, all you have to do is send a copy to: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur Blvd., Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. Remember, we work on a lead time, so it may take a couple of months to get to it, but each submission will be considered.

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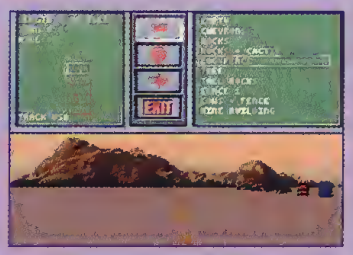

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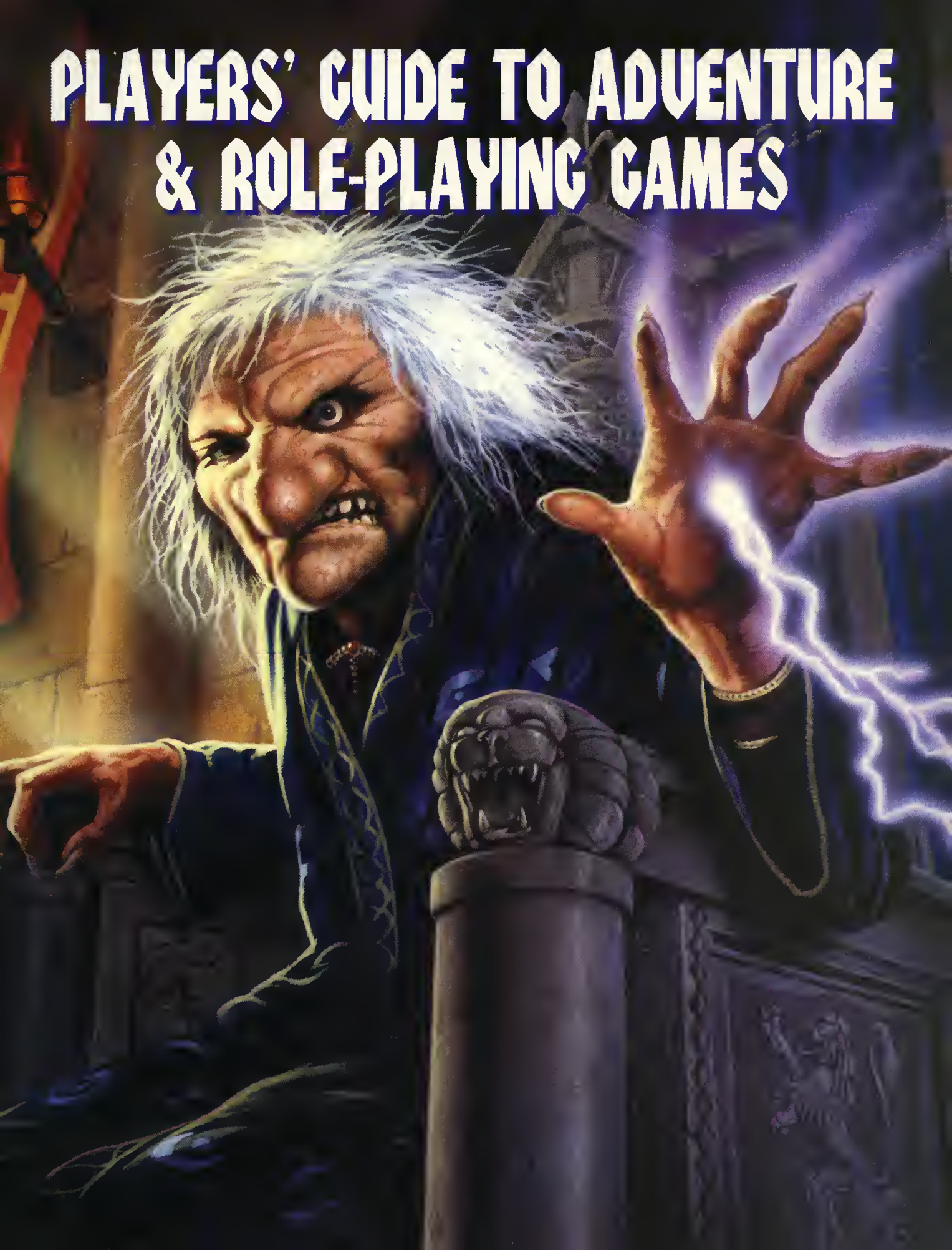

Cartridge Quests

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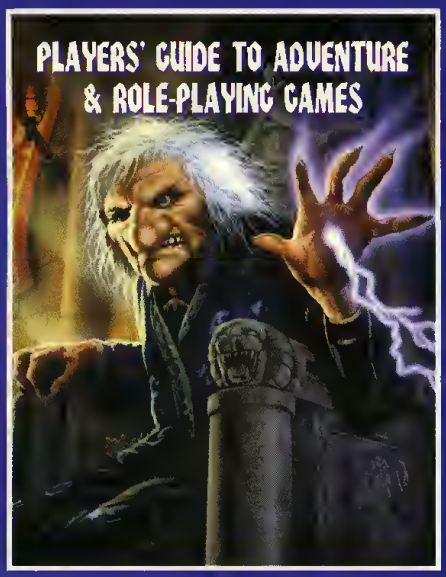


by Bill Kunkel

Although adventures and role-playing began electronic life on computers, they also have an extensive video game pedigree. Among the earliest releases for the old Atari 2600 was **Adventure**, a stripped-down dungeon quest with a sprinkling of arcade elements. Later, during the 8-Bit revolution, adventures and RPGs hit like a tidal wave, introducing a major new category of game to the NES and SMS libraries. The craze began with the release of original video game adventures such as the **Phantasy Star** titles on the SMS, and the **Final Fantasy** series on the NES, along with translations of computer standards such as Sir-Tech's **Wizardry** and Lord British's **Ultima** (FCI), albeit in streamlined form. In Japan, that country's first RPG on the Famicom (NES), Henk Rogers' **Black Onyx** (Bullet Proof Software), started a sensation which saw the next major Famicom RPG release, Enix's **Dragon Quest**, sell millions of cartridges.

Many would argue that video games are an inferior medium for adventures and RPGs, that only the computer can satisfy the many demands of the genre. On the other hand, while computers have often bogged users down with typing, word puzzles, and multiple keystroke commands for page after page of esoteric spells, the simplicity of the video game interface has forced designers to cut the fat out of their games. On-screen inventories as well as the extensive use of menus and icons were at least partially the result of video game conversions, necessity, in other words, once again became the mother of invention.

Another invention that helped the evolving popularity of the genre in video game format was the development of tiny batteries which could be stored in the game cartridge itself, allowing players to save games for later play. These batteries, with an approximate lifetime of five years, allowed video game adventures and RPGs to attain all the epic scope of the computer games by eliminating the need to complete the entire quest in a single sitting.

Video Game Originals

Now that the 16-Bit era has arrived, bells clanging and whistles blowing, gamers are blessed with an even more impressive lineup of cartridge quests. The original series, such as **Phantasy Star** (Sega) and **Final Fantasy** (Square Soft), have made a smooth transition from eight to 16-Bit. **Final Fantasy III** is due for the SNES while Sega prepares **Phantasy Star IV** for the Genesis.

The Final Fantasy games are unique originals on the video game platform.

Phantasy Star IV uses the same distinctive angled topdown perspective as its SMS progenitors, albeit with far superior graphics. Players new to the **PS** universe may find the convoluted plot line a little tough to follow. The first installment was a fairly straightforward rid-the-kingdom-of-monsters adventure, while the second game introduced more overtly science fictional elements as the p-c

Wizardry was one of the first fantasy series to be copied from the PC format.

struggled to repair Mother Brain, the mega-computer which had heretofore kept things running smoothly on the player-character's planet. **PS III** was a massive, multi-generational saga which saw various groups align in order to take on the fearsome Dark Force, who was *apparently* destroyed at the end of that chapter. **PS IV** brings with it a new cast of questing characters journeying to multiple planets in one of the most massive video game adventures ever compiled.

Final Fantasy III, another series noted for the epic scale of its installments, is 30% larger than its predecessor, with a less linear plot line, superior sound and graphics, and a spruced-up interface.

TTI's Duo, the number three horse in the 16-Bit race, has a rich library of adventure and RP games. An example of one of its best RPGs is **Exile 2** (TTI/Duo CD), which offers gamers the role of Sadler, a defender of his people who must cross terrible wastelands where he meets enemies as well as potential allies in order to learn the magic he will need to complete his quest.

American Sammy has been among the strongest third-party NES publishers of adventures and role-players. After adapting several New World computer titles, the company with the funny name is preparing to release **Sorcerer's Kingdom** for the Genesis. In this RPG, the Dark Seal, which has imprisoned Evil for as long as anyone can remember, is obviously past warranty and beginning to dissipate. This has led to some unruly monsters wandering the land. The player-character must complete a series of intricate quests and run out a sufficient number of monsters to become a sort of

tenth-degree black belt warrior (just ike Dad! The plot is banal but the sound effects and graphics are solid and the music is excellent.

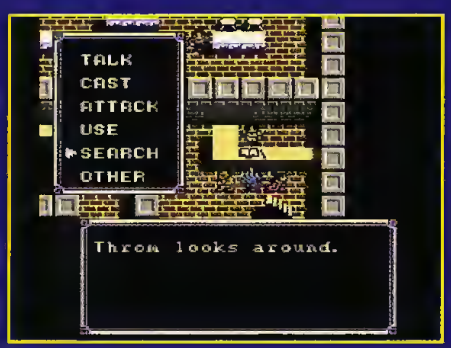
Due later this year from Renovation meanwh le is **The Journey Home: Quest for the Throne** for the SNES, in which the player is cast as a Duke in a foreign land who hears rumors that his father's kingdom is under attack by a nasty warlord So it's off on a long journey home which comprises six levels including a massive ship, a labyrinth-like castle, and a network of caverns and catacombs The game uses a topdown perspective with characters seen in an angled point-of-view

Quest for the Throne also uses an interesting technology dubbed A.L.C S. (Automatic Level Changing System) an artificial intel igence-based system that determines a player's ski l level and resets the game to provide an appropriate level of challenge

It Came from the Computer

The majority of video game adventures and RPGs originated in computer format. A typical example of a computer-based adventure classic making the transition to the 16-Bit scene is Icom s **Beyond Shadowgate** (TTI/CD/Duo What was a static-screen adventure on computers, however is lavishly drawn and animated in its new format. The plot deals with the son of the character who took Castle Shadowgate from the Hordes of Evi in the original game Evi is probably the single most popular antagonist in adventures and RPGs) As the story opens, his father has been killed and the castle overrun by Dark Forces on the comeback trai and the player-character is imprisoned in his own dungeon

FCI the publishers who made history by bringing **Ultima: Exodus** to the NES are taking this stalwart series to the SNES with **Ultima: the False Prophet.**



The Ultima adventure series continues its popularity on the video game level.

The plot. Lord British has been rescued, but his release has also freed an army of gargoyles that threaten to destroy Britannia. This series has been extremely popular both here and abroad In Japan for example **Ultima** has been merchandised so extensively that when Lord British Richard Garriott) visits, he is treated as a celebrity of the first rank, on the level of a major film or sports star

Another computer-to-video game translation is the 8-Meg **Obitus** (Bullet Proof Software/SNES). This game originally published by Psygnosis casts the player as a character transported from the present into a medieval creep show The only way back? Locate the four lost gems of the Dark Tower by journeying to a quartet of different kingdoms each with its very own castle and dungeon ah the pressures of keeping up with the Joneses!). The colorfu wide-screen graphics use a first-person perspective with multiple character interactions

Players tired of dragons, dungeons and magical spells can check out the sultry climate of **Monkey Island** and its new sequel **Monkey Island II** (JVC/Sega CD) both based on the popular LucasArts computer games which mix tropical settings and pirate adventure Pirate fans wi also want to explore **Pirates! Gold** MicroProse/Genesis , a buccaneer style RPG/adventure which was originally pubished for computers as **Pirates**.

Outer space is another popular source for adventures and RPGs, as seen in **Space Quest: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers** Sierra/Sega CD) based on the long-running Sierra computer series. And if futuristic thrillers are your cup of tea another superb computer translation is **Rise of the Dragon** Sega/Sega CD based on Dynamix's adventure set in the Los Angeles of 2053. Starring private eye William "Blade" Hunter the game has superb graphics, a *Blade Runner* ambiance and a bri liant interface to recommend it.

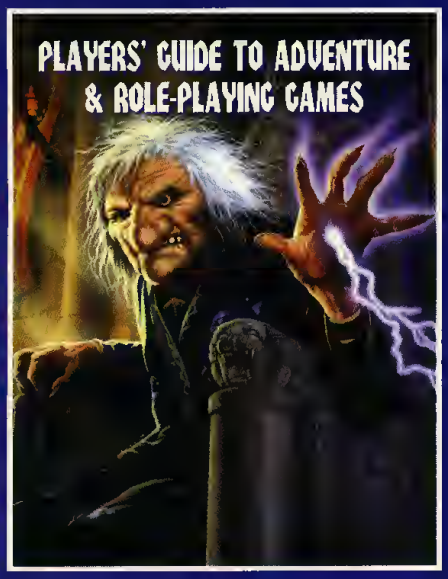
Out of This World (Virgin Games/Genesis and Interplay/SNES combines hot-looking cinematic cut scenes with state-of-the-art polygon graphics and digitized sound effects to create a milestone sci-fi adventure The plot casts the player-character as a scientist who has an accident while testing a particle accelerator The mishap transports him to a hostile alien dimension n the ever-popular amnesiac state RPGs like characters without memories since they don't require the player to have any specialized knowledge.)

Following on the heels of **Out of This World** is **Flashback** (U.S Gold/Genesis Its plot is somewhat reminiscent of John Carpenter's film *They Live*, with the player cast as a secret agent named Conrad who is n charge of a project involving special eyeglasses which allow the wearer to see aliens living among us masquerading as humans Ah but the aliens uncover the p-c s identity and (what else?) erase his memory! While seeking refuge in a dense jungle Conrad must stay alive wh le trying to remember his elusive past. The sound and graphics in this game are truly eye-popping, superbly animated and drenched n vivid colors and jungle textures.

Spellcraft: Aspects of Valor (ASCII/SNES is a PC conversion that combines role-playing and adventure elements. It seems a group of nearly-omnipotent wizards are involved in an nternecine conflict which could jeopardize life as we know and love it. As the game begins, the p-c has been drawn to Stonehenge where he begins his quest to learn magic, and collect the magical objects required to challenge the wizards on their own turf

In Summary

It s been a long road from the days when Atari's **Adventure** offered 2600-players dragons that looked more ke ducks. Today's video game adventures and RPGs are as sophisticated as all but the most advanced computer sagas



Close-up on Young Merlin

Mum's the Word on Westwood's Latest Adventure!

by Bill Kunkel

Young Merlin an exciting new adventure video game with action elements, is based around a boldly experimental concept. to produce a game without the use of language Characters *do* communicate, through the use of icons and ustrated sequences, but so far nto the project, with the exception of the word "Danger" scrawled across certain boarded-up areas of a m ne there is only one word in the entire game

"We thought about it and thought about it," explained Westwood s Louis Castle who conceived the game and has seen it through the bulk of its design and programming cycle "And when al was said and done there was only one word which we could find no replacement for· meanwhile " The most popular word in comic books turned out to be absolutely irreplaceable th nk about it, how else does one express the concept of an event occurring simultaneously, but n another area?

Young Merlin is sort of a cross between the early **King's Quest** games and the **Link/Zelda** series It uses an elevated three dimensional viewpoint, with the player-character under the gamer's direct control Two action buttons—representing the young wizard s two hands—are ava able to hold and use inventory items This enables Merlin to grip a magical powder which momentarily stuns enemies in one hand and his primary offensive weapon—large stars which explode on mpact—in the other

The game revolves around a series of tasks which the youthful Merl n must perform and the enemies he must overcome in order to accomplish them The central medium through which he obtains the objects required to do the job is an enchanted waterway nto which he must throw a series of precious stones With each gem Merlin hurls into the water, a rainbow grows and an object is left behind for his use

The obstacles and enemies Merlin encounters are plentifu and often powerful, and a star blast to the kisser is often the only way to eliminate them

The enemies are a great collection of distinctive-looking baddies spear-toting warthogs, tiny but relentless Meanies· hedgerow monsters, terrible tempered trees and many many others

The ack of anguage is occasionally frustrating, but after a few minutes of play time the gamer will begin to catch the drift. A fairy at an enchanted pool for example explains that an evi entity captured her reflection and imprisoned it in a gemstone This information is communicated n the form of a short, animated sequence related entirely inside a comics-style speech balloon Westwood developers of such hits as the **Eye of the Beholder** series (SSI), **Dune II** (Virgin Games), and **Kyrandia** (Westwood Studios have spent mucho man hours laboring over this unique gem of a game **Young Merlin** was originally tested with a young boy named Gage as the star but poor reaction to the character's visual appearance during focus group testing ("We thought he was really cute," Louis explained "but the boys thought he was wimpy and the girls thought he was cute. but also wimpy ") lead to some changes. The player-character was buffed-up given a more muscular physically imposing look, and underwent a name change from Gage to Merl n If you're dealing with a young magician you might as well go with the best known name this side of Siegfried & Roy

As a youthful wizard, Merlin must test his magic against many enemies.

Young Merlin offers players a variety of settings—including forests towns a sprawling underground mine and even an underwater sequence—as wel as some first-rate puzzles a great sense of humor, and even an arcade-style ride through the mine on an ore cart. The graphics are excellent and the music perfectly accompanies each sequence Without a doubt, Westwood s ingenuity wi make this another winner

In the Grip of the Tentacle!

An Advance Look at the Maniac Mansion Sequel

by Arnie Katz

Rid ng on the success of **Maniac Mansion** a team jointly led by Tim Schafer and David Grossman expects to have the sequel, **Day of the Tentacle**, ready for PCs and multimedia CD-ROM sometime this summer

Grossman and Schafer have been with LucasArts for more than three years n fact, they joined the company on the same day and they've worked together ever since. The two designers both in their mid-20s worked on **Monkey Island** and **Monkey Island II** and they've brought that experience to this major new project.

Not that the lead designers see **Day of the Tentacle** as an "off-the-shelf" affair "One big change is the way we make the games now " explains Tim "The budgets are so much larger we have to plan things out much more in advance and get more specialists involved "

Bernard one of the youthful heroes of **Maniac Mansion** returns to star in the second adventure He s back in the mansion with Dr Fred but the weird scientist isn't the main problem this time A freak accident mutates one of the tentacles nto an insane genius. Like any self-respecting creature it immediately launches a plan to conquer the world

Using a time machine constructed by Dr Fred, Bernard journeys to the past to prevent the mutation from happen ng. Unfortunately the device malfunctions and flings three kids nto various places in the time stream The gamer must use his own wits and skills to repair the time mach ne and rescue the marooned victims, and return them to safety

Hilarious animations add to the already humorous plot line of the entire game.

Day of the Tentacle will look and sound much better than **Maniac Mansion**, Dave and Tim promise "The technology is a quantum leap ahead of **Maniac Mansion** " Tim declares

The improvement n the visuals is immediately apparent upon booting the game The backgrounds are much more detailed and the characters are both larger and more ntricately animated. "It looks nothing ike **Maniac** " adds Dave

"It's fluid l ke a Warner Brothers cartoon " Tim amplified "We got some really talented artists in Larry Ahern and Peter Chan Larry is the lead animator and did all the character design."

One of the design goals was greater artistic unity "**Day of the Tentacle** has a really together look, even though we had a lot of artists working on it," says Tim "because one person oversaw that aspect of the game "

"The game is coming out as part of LucasArts 'Talkies line for CD " says Dave, "so that version will have ful speech throughout."

The floppy wi have speech in the five-m nute ntroductory sequence but not in the game itself That's about the only difference between the two editions, the developers insist. "The graphics components wil be the same," says David

Although LucasArts had some interest n doing a **Maniac Mansion** sequel Tim and David actually initiated the project. Brainstorming sessions, which ncluded **Maniac Mansion** designers Ron Gilbert and Gary Winnick, roughed out the story and major puzzles

"Once we had that, we brought Larry and Peter into the project," recalls David "We set to work developing an art style for the thing. We decided to base it largely on the work of Chuck Jones "

"We actually had the opportunity to take the game and show it to Chuck," said Tim "That was pretty exciting."

"He was more in touch with it than expected " Tim comments "Thought he might be afraid of computers, but he had very specific things to say about the Nintendo games that were made about the Road Runner He knows about new technology "

Next came the design specifications document. It was a 30-page walk-through of the game "That was the first time we put things down on paper " says Tim "We had only one rule, to come up with at least two puzzles a day "

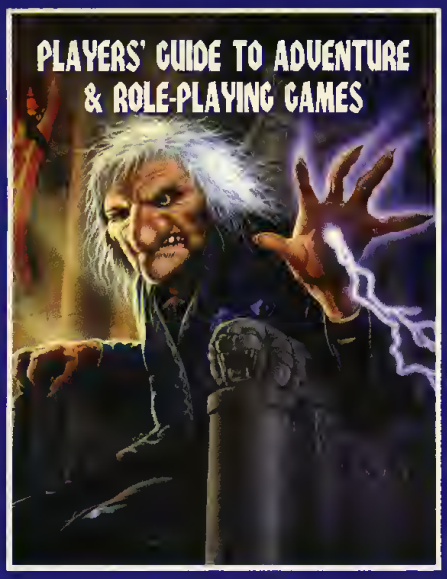
Then they worked on maps to have rooms in which to place al those puzzles Once they completed the maps artists prepared a black and white version of the whole game (Many games are finished one room at a time so that there isn't a complete game unti just before it goes to the beta testers "We got a much better feel for the whole game, for the connectivity," Tim says

The voices heard on **Day of the Tentacle** belong to professional actors all members of AFTRA, the entertainment union "We were very much against just using people around the office, because we've heard some of the games that have come out doing that," Tim notes. "That was okay for the first couple of games but if this is ever going to become a legitimate form of entertainment we have to have great actors "

A familiar style of interaction will help to speed things up during the game.

Tamlynn Barra supervises the record-ng of character voices **Day of the Tentacle** employed eight actors some of whom portray several roles Fans of the "WKRP" television series will recognize the voice of Bernard as Richard Sanders (Les Nessman Tamlynn frequently produced several takes of each scene The designers istened to them and picked the reading that best fit their conception

Maniac Mansion fans have wanted another adventure in the same vein for a long time The Grossman-Schafer design tandem is ready to deliver



Opening a New Land

Lands of Lore Starts a New Adventure Series

by Arnie Katz and Joyce Worley

Pop culture villains are often as remarkable as the heroes. Who can forget the sinister schem ng of Moriarity or the awesome presence of Darth Vader?

Add to the ist of memorable villains the name Scotia. The sinister sorceress combines the worst features of Livia "I Claudius" and the Wicked Queen from *Snow White*

The combat scenes require the player to react quickly or suffer damage.

This remarkable evil-doer is the main menace in an equally remarkable game **Lands of Lore: The Throne of Chaos** debuts for personal computers under the WestWood Studios/Virgin Games banner this month A PC CD-ROM edition is also nearing completion and should be in the stores before fall

When Virgin Games paid a multi-million-dollar price for Las Vegas-based Westwood Studios **Lands of Lore** was the product the international game publisher had in mind

At the time of the purchase Brett Sperry and Louis Castle s then-independent development house had already scored with **Dragon Strike** SSI/MS-DOS Amiga) and **Eye of the Beholder** SSI/MS-DOS) Yet there was a sense in the industry that Westwood had only just begun to tap its enormous potential.

When players and critics alike praised **Kyrandia** and **Dune II** everyone nodded sagely and congratulated Virgin president Martin Alper on a smart purchase In the words of old-time entertainer Al Jolson "You ain't seen nothing yet!"

Lands of Lore is a breathtakingly cinematic role playing adventure Although the most difficult of its three levels is comparable to **Eye of the Beholder** the game is simple enough to attract those who don't ordinarily play this type of game

In fact, that's part of the ph losophy that underlies the first application of Westwood s excellent new game-engine "We want more than just the people who already play these adventures " a company official tells **EG** Multimedia is a major part of Westwood s future plans and it believes that the mass audience prefers less complicated amusements than the typical fantasy RPG

The icon-driven **Lands of Lore: The Throne of Chaos** fuses elements of adventures and role playing games. The non-linear plot lets the player wander and explore but the game s goals keep the quest headed in the right direction

The Kingdom of Gladstone has successfully fought off the assaults of the Dark Army for generations, but now one woman threatens to accomplish the goal which this ravening horde could not quite achieve Fortified by the shape-shifting power of the newly discovered Nether Mask, the sorceress Scotia has launched a campaign to crush Gladstone as the first step toward world domination As Gladstone s champion the adventurer meets many friends during his mission Some may even join the party A thri ling non-interactive ntroduction shows the dramatic arrival of a mounted messenger and Scotia finding the Nether Mask. Ph "**Eye of the Beholder**" Gorro programmed the beautifully animated bit-mapped monsters and heroes

Sixteen frames of animation make every monster encounter exciting. Each monster was modeled ndividually so no two orcs look exactly alike More than 50 different creatures populate the adventure s 39 areas

The smooth, cinematic graphics make for an enjoyable gaming experience.

Those tired of spells that work suspiciously like automatic weapons wil love the magic in **Lands of Lore.** Spells and magic items don't just pop onto the screen, they are conjured

For example, you don't start with automapping; you get a chance to acqu re a magic map early in the game Once possessed the map becomes a permanent part of the interface Another usefu item a compass, is found later

The combat system is easy After picking a weapon from inventory with a click, the gamer hits the attack button The program figures out the actual attack.

Players can ncrease ski in two ways during the game They gain prowess through combat, but they can also use quieter moments for weapons practice Scotia also develops her ski ls gradually and her power is fairly limited when the game starts. When defeated in one form Scotia shape-shifts to something sti worse. The morphing process is another of the game s major triumphs.

Westwood s days as "that promising development house in the desert" are over It has arrived as a cutting-edge producer of electronic adventures

Return of the Phantom

Death Stalks the Opera House in the Latest Microprose Adventure

by Arnie Katz

Past and present swirl together in a macabre mystery that you, as police detective Raoul Montand of the Sureté, must solve Designer Raymond Benson who worked on **Ultima VII** and **Ultima VII Part 2**, spins a tale derived from the classic horror epic that has scared and delighted the world starting with the Gaston Leroux story through no fewer than three major motion pictures, and the contemporary stage musical

The disturbed Phantom has taken a young lass captive and she needs help!

The action begins at the 1993 premiere of "Don Juan Triumphant." This opera is a composition written more than a century earlier by Erik, the original Phantom of the Opera It was found, along with other artifacts such as the famous mask, around the turn of the century

The non-interactive introduction shows the gala opening night which is violently disrupted when the huge chandelier crashes to the floor during the performance!

The game goes interactive shortly after this disaster The player, as Det. Montand returns to the now-empty Opera House where he learns more about the events surrounding the crime

Things get wilder and weirder by the minute from that point on Montand must rescue the original Christine and then save her modern-day counterpart.

Return of the Phantom can be fairly tough when played at the Challenge setting with standard mouse control. Running it in Novice mode with the special novice mouse configuration makes this graphics adventure quite suitable for nexperienced or even first-time adventurers The easier difficulty setting removes the most fiendish traps reduces the number of decision points and in general makes the game flow quite smoothly The novice mouse set-up makes all possible command choices visible on screen (In standard mode, the player clicks on hot spots to see options

The interface follows the trend toward keyboardless control The mouse handles everyth ng, usually in conjunction with menus Clicking the appropriate portion of the screen sends Montand in that direction and a ine of text appears to explain exactly what is happening.

The menu in the lower left corner, beneath the large graphic display, lets Montand execute simple and complex actions The player forms a command sentence by clicking on one of the 10 verbs and then on an inventory item or a "hot spot" in the main window

Great animated sequences provide a realistic backdrop for this old mystery

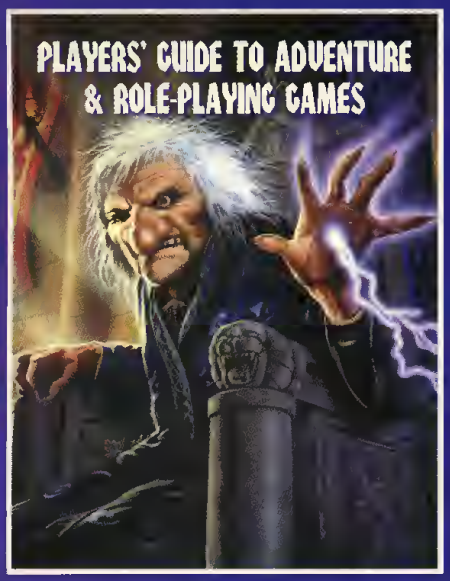
Appropriately for a mystery, Montand gathers most of his information by talking to people. The menu-driven conversation system is easy to operate though the dialogue is very, very extensive.

During conversation a menu of possible responses replaces the verb list. Whenever someone speaks including Montand he or she appears in a pop-up windows that contains a well-drawn vignette and the text of their remark. It's very attractive though the forthcoming CD-ROM edition's ful speech will be a welcome upgrade.

The artwork is stylish and distinctive Most important, it generates the proper atmosphere for this bizarre terror tale.

Computerists can customize some of the visual trimmings, like pans and fades, n ine with hardware capabilities **Return of the Phantom** plays well on a 386 though a 486 makes the animation look even better

Michael Bross music dovetails with the visuals. It's moody and romantic with overtones of classical music Just the thing for an operatic mystery!



Exploring Arkania

An In-depth Preview of Sir-Tech's Latest Challenge

by Alex Rees

In a departure from its lengthy and well-known **Wizardry** series Sir-Tech approaches the role-playing genre from a new angle **Realms of Arkania** is a new system based on a popular book-based RPG from Germany **Das Schwarze Auge Blade of Destiny** is the first game of the already planned trilogy of these games. The story is set within the land of Arkania where the players are pitted against the threat of an orc nvasion The only way to stop the marauding horde is to recover an ancient sword and drive them back to their own lands.

The first task is to form a hardy band of adventurers that can withstand the rigors of the journey which is before them Characters can be designed n a couple of different fashions. If the gamer just wants to create a particular type of person with minimal hassle there is a method for doing just that. For more variety and ndividualism in the characters there are two levels of complexity in which the gamer can play The simpler setting lets the player concentrate solely on the adventuring aspect of the game, while the advanced game gives greater control and responsibility regarding the development and use of battle skills

There are a dozen character archetypes to choose from including hunter dwarf, witch, rogue and three races of elf Each has a set of statistical requirements to meet in order to be chosen These statistics include seven standard attributes that one would expect to find in an RPG such as wisdom agility and strength To balance out the positive there are also seven negative values, sort of characters flaws. Superstition necrophobia and avarice are just a few examples of these

Four different generation methods let you make the character that you want.

Once the team is assembled, it is time to go forth and begin to earn a name by battling the minions of darkness As the party travels about n Arkania the majority of the game play wi l take place n a first-person three dimensional perspective From this viewpoint, the player wi move about the towns and dungeons. When moving around the countryside the screen wi become a satel ite view of the entire realm n which the party is represented by a red ne or circle

The **Realms of Arkania** series has been designed to be somewhat less combat oriented than many other RPGs forcing one to play more strategically but there are sti plenty of bad guys that would gladly try to keep the adventurer from winning. Combat takes place in an overhead view The area of the present location and the combatants are represented on a terrain which is criss-crossed by a grid of squares. These units are used as a method of measuring how far the participants of the melee can travel one round The battles proceed in an orderly fashion in which each ndividual takes their turn in a random order during the round Everyone has a certain number of action points to apply toward their actions and once spent, that person is done for the round **Realms of Arkania** ncludes a feature to allow the computer to dictate the players actions automatically in fights Combat continues normally but without any need for input from the player but ful control is always available

You will encounter many fearsome foes that will have to be vanquished.

The magic-users n the party wi find that they have close to 200 spells at their disposal from a number of different schools of lore ike Demonology llusion and Healing. 85 of these spells are graphically represented so that the player can see their results when they are cast during combat.

The quest of **Blade of Destiny** is designed to be playable for both beginning and advanced RPG enthusiasts and contains more than 400 hours of game play There are over 70 towns dungeons and ruins to visit and nvestigate while you seek out the pieces of the map which will eventually lead to the legendary blade itself

An overhead auto-mapping feature keeps track of your movements.

Unlimited Adventures

Make Your Own Adventures in Forgotten Realms

by Ed Dille

As Strategic Simulations nc. s fina product in the AD&D Gold Box series prior to the ntroduction of its new gaming engine Dark Sun **Unlimited Adventures** seeks to mol ify the legions of fans that have followed the series since its nception with **Pool of Radiance**.

Not that many of these same fans won't remain loyal to the new series, but this product, designed by Jason Linhart and Kiri Naiman wi allow them to continue adventuring in fam iar surroundings TSR s **Forgotten Realms**, if so desired n addition to providing a fu featured computer dungeon master's dream design interface **Unlimited Adventures** also comes with a complete intermediate level adventure entitled The Heirs to Skul Crag.

The module begins with the party depositing a caravan they have escorted at the city of Skull Crag. After spending a restfu night in the common room of the local inn the party should head south east and through a tunnel carved out of the mountain Emerging into the fresh air a lone rider is observed being pursued by a band of h giants and ogres The rider's horse is shot from beneath him and the party rushes to his aid After the battle it is discovered that he is Sir Dutiocs and he bears the body of the slain Roadwarden He provides the party with a writ which wi allow them passage to the castle keep.

Unlimited Adventures allows the gamer to create or change many monsters.

There they wi discover that Virdruand was to be the heir to Sku Crag, but before a new Roadwarden may be chosen the arms of the slain champion must be recovered The mystica sword shield helm and lance embody the power that sustains Skul Crag and the recovery of each of these items are ndividual quests that the party volunteers to undertake

Sku Crag is a satisfying and well scripted adventure players that find it too short must remember that it is not the heart of the program they purchased rather an entertaining bonus to the design system itself Unlimited Adventures ives up to its bi ing in that players are mited only by their own magination

In addition to a comprehensive repertoire of pictures, maps, and dungeon motifs that players can employ without restriction in their designs, artistic dungeon masters may also import graphic files from either EA s Deluxe Paint or ZSoft's PC Paintbrush These files may take the form of big pictures such as overland maps detailed NPC portraits tied to events in the design combat sprites or entirely new monsters The attributes of the latter may be specified on a series of menu pages that nclude questions about hit dice thac0, special attacks and al of the standard AD&D matrix items

It is possible to take a Fire Elemental or Vampire Lord and turn him nto a wimp, but it is also possible to scan a picture of Rush Limbaugh colorize it with one of the aforementioned paint programs and design combat attributes appropriate to whatever one s perception of that particular character happens to be As an example, n designing a game nvolving a plot by conservative elements of the realm to overthrow the existing power structure one could develop adversaries ike Wi iam F Buckley and equ p them with special attacks ike Paralyzing Gaze and Feeblemind Sim larly Bi ly Cl nton Zombies could be empowered to nflict specific attacks on the party ke Mass Charm Mind Blank or even the well-known and dreaded Otto s rresistible Dance

The only drawback is that one is unl kely to play one s own designs After all everything would be known time and again in the testing phase Designing an adventure the scope of the ones depicted in the gold box series would require a considerable commitment on the part of the player, which would necessitate corresponding recognition for the effort invested or the player would be unlikely to put forth that effort.

Two avenues exist for fulfi ng this player need The first nvolves a design contest that SSI is sponsoring, with decent prizes in many categories

The second is less tangible but inevitably more fulfi ing. As forums such as America On Line are already catering to AD&D enthusiasts it only seems natural that their file ibraries act as a clearing house for budding designers. In this manner purchasers of the product could support one another with an unlimited series of new adventures Additionally they would receive timely feedback of their creations on ine

This program will provide hours of fun for gamers and designers alike In the end an opportunity such as this can only serve gaming as a whole as the next generation of game designers whet their appetites in the user-friendly and extensively creative environment of **Unlimited Adventures**.

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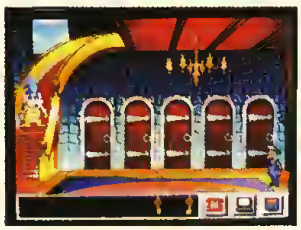

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GAMES GO TO THE MOVIES

Games and Movies: Born to Run

Why Some Licenses Fly and Others Die

by Bill Kunkel

n the early 80s when video games were going through the roof, the motion picture ndustry began taking a serious look at our sti l-young medium When MCA/Universal attempted to sue Nintendo for copyright nfringement on N ntendo s **Donkey Kong** game MCA claimed that it owned the rights to King Kong and that DK was a rip-off of its big monkey) it actually came to terms with Coleco which was marketing the home version in the States Many believed at the time that this was an attempt on the part of MCA to break nto the lucrative electronic games market even dangl ng the possibi ity of a partnersh p with Coleco wh le putting the boot to a ikely future competitor As it happened MCA was unable to establish actual ownership of King Kong and lost al the way up to the Supreme Court.

At the same time film giants like Paramount and 20th Century Fox were busy rummaging through film and TV icenses as source material for their own nascent video game companies Some of the icenses that came out of those wild days made a lot of sense—such as Paramount s prized *Star Trek* property Too many others however clocked in somewhere between l-advised and insane Among the many movie titles which were either scheduled or actually produced for the 2600 ncluded *Porky's*, *Kramer vs. Kramer* a husband and wife threw th ngs at one another across a screen), and *Marathon Man*. This al went down during a period when even sensible icenses were being crudely exploited for the most part—anybody remember Atari s horrendous 2600 games based on *E T* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*?

When video games went bust in the U.S in the mid-80s many publishers placed the blame on al those terrible movie icenses along with Hollywood's insensitive ntrusion nto the industry As a result, during the early days of the 8-Bit revolution, the emphasis was on creating new characters which could in turn be icensed on their own Nintendo s Mario being the ultimate example But as more and more companies signed on as th rd-party NES publishers, the need to stand out became al the more mportant.

Today's electronic gaming environment has carried that tradition even further Ocean reportedly paid n the range of a m ion bucks for the rights to Steven Spielberg's big budget film adaptation of Michael Crichton s *Jurassic Park*. It joins such movies as *The Terminator Alien 3*, *Wayne s World*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *The Dark Half Batman Returns*, *Hook*, *The Addams Family Dragon. the Bruce Lee Story The Tom & Jerry Movie*, *Home Alone 2* and *Hunt for Red October*

Question what do these titles have in common? Answer they are al resonably good choices for adaptation to the electronic gaming medium They make *sense*.

Fans of the Dracula movies can now play out the story on the video screen.

Animated Adaptations

With the recent success of *The Simpsons* on TV and Disney's ineup of recent fu l-length animated hits in theaters pub ishers are naturally looking to this fertile source of material as video and comput er game fodder The video game field is especially well-suited to adapting cartoon material because of its typical reliance on that type of imagery Capcom produced an NES version of *The Little Mermaid* at the end of the 8-Bit cycle and is now hard at work converting the Disney smash *Aladdin* nto a 16-Bit triumph for the SNES wh le Virgin wi produce the Genesis version In fact, the Genesis version is a joint production nvolving Virgin Sega and Disney—who will provide the animation sequences courtesy of the original film artists

Sunsoft, meanwhile snagged the Genesis rights to Disney's Oscar-winner *Beauty and the Beast*. "This film was a cinematic work of art," said Rita Zimmer er exec VP at Sunsoft. "Sunsoft s game development staff ntends to retain the same outstanding quality n graphics, transferring excellence to the video screen " Pretty lofty talk, eh for a video game adaptation of an animated film? It s merely an indication of how serious this business has become.

Ocean the folks who paid al that money for *Jurassic Park* rights has also entered nto the an mated film conversion sweepstakes with NES Game Boy and SNES versions of Paramount s *Cool World*, based on the adventures of Jack Deebs a cartoonist from our world who is sucked into an an mated universe where the characters are known as Doodles

High Tide for Ocean

Ocean n fact, has become one of the prime movers in adapting hot film icenses into electronic games. In *RoboCop 3*, which has been converted for the NES and SNES, everybody's favorite cyborg law enforcement officer must come out of retirement in order to take on a cadre of renegade cops who are using unlawfu means to clear residents out of an Old Detroit hood so that O C P (the corporate bad guys from the first two fi ms can renovate it.

A more conventional cop fi m *Lethal Weapon*, is also headed to video games courtesy of Ocean n this NES/Game Boy/SNES adaptation Martin Riggs and Roger Murtaugh are ke Robocop, also investigating a renegade cop. n order to solve a string of crimes nclud ng bombngs, money laundering and kidnapping, Riggs and Murtaugh pursue their quarry through subway tunnels, malls, shipyards and even the ventilation system of a high-rise office building.

In a more off-beat selection, Ocean has also produced a SNES game based on the somewhat obscure 92 fi m *Radio Flyer* n the fi m, two troubled brothers seek to escape the painfu realities of their unhappy home ife by attempting to design and build a powered glider using their Radio Flyer wagon as the centerpiece. The game places the gamer as young Bobby at the glider's controls swooping to scoop up coins fuel and other bonus items with M ke serving to help guide him n his travels The game makes exceptional use of the SNES s scal ng technology as the flyer soars above his home town an amusement park, and other fascinating locales

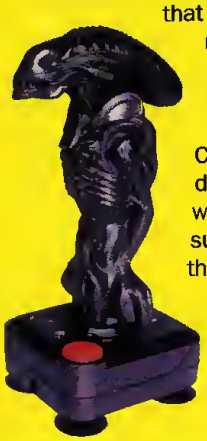
Players everywhere of course are sa ivating over the prospect of a game based on the best seller and upcoming movie *Jurassic Park*, a story that iterally roars for game adaptation A m ionaire buys up every scrap of mosquito-bearing amber and has his scientists extract remnants of d nosaur DNA to be used to recreate the denizens of prehistoric Earth as part of a gigantic zoo/amusement park. But things go tragically wrong. The possibi ities for gam ng simulations of classic scenes from the book and forthcoming film are stupendous

The game adaptation of RoboCop 3 lets players patrol the streets of Detroit.

The Ocean project ncludes the SNES/NES/Game Boy versions of *Jurassic Park*, based on the upcoming Univer sal fi m. The player is cast as the film's hero Grant, who must cross the island-based d nosaur zoo in order to rescue two children from the rampaging saurians There s a T-Rex who chases the trio as they raft upriver a Stegosaur a Dimetrodon and the stars of the book, those devi ish Raptors. n the course of all this adventure Grant must also restore power to the main computer

Movies into... Joysticks?!

Players who want to *really* integrate their favorite movie characters into their game playing have a rare, if somewhat unusual, opportunity to do just that thanks to the new line of Cheetah CharacteriSticks.



That's right, Cheetah is producing joysticks which feature such film faves as the Alien, the Terminator, and the Dark Knight-style Caped Crusader from "Batman Returns" in the control position. Here s how it works: sculptures of the characters are produced and inserted onto standard joystick/joypad bases to be used as the directional control device in lieu of a stick or multi-direction pad.

The **Alien 3** stick consists of an adult drone Alien, depicted from the knees up, standing patiently atop the controller base, ready for your commands. The **Terminator 2: Judgement Day** controller features the exo-skeletal head of Arnold's T-800 Terminator staring grimly ahead, while the **Batman Returns** joystick deploys a full-body model of the black-garbed Batman, arms folded across his ribs, standing grimly atop the control mount, prepared for action.

For those gamers who prefer the more traditional, comic book-style Batman, there s the standard **Batman** CharacteriStick. And, of course, what collection would be complete without a **Bart Simpson** controller? As the cartoon and movie characters abundant on the silver screen are really making an impact on the video gaming spectrum, we can probably expect more of these products in the future.

The CharacteriSticks are available for the NES, SMS, Genesis, Amstrad, Sinclair Spectrum, and Atari-compatible systems (such as the Commodore C64 and Amiga).

—Bill Kunkel

(which has been sabotaged allowing the d nosaurs to roam free of the r restraining pens destroy the Raptor nests radio the mainland for help and reach the hel pad with the kids n tow in order to escape the island before the authorities nuke it.

To help accomplish this Grant is provided with a variety of weapons, nclud ng bombs computer passcards and a gun capable of firing four different types of ammo

Another movie project of Ocean s that hasn't drawn quite as much attention is **Dennis the Menace** a tie-in with the upcoming Warner Bros fi m n this fi m-based game a neighborhood bu ly steals Mr Wi son s prized coin collection and Dennis must recover it by journeying through forest mazes a gymnasium with a medicine ball-throwing coach an under ground aqua-labyrinth and a dark basement with piles of coal and fiery boilers

Ocean hasn't neglected computer gamers either producing PC and Amiga versions of *Hook* (the Spielberg film based on the Peter Pan saga **Robocop 3-D** and an Amiga conversion of **The Addams Family**

LucasArts at the Cinema Arcade

No software publisher has better synergy between movies and electronic games than LucasArts Wh le George Lucas fi m division turns out megahits, the game division translates them nto superb games, and sometimes vice versa (**Maniac Mansion** an early LucasArts computer adventure has been transformed nto a cable TV show)

The latest efforts from this outstand ng soft ware producer nclude a PC CD-ROM version of the classic computer adventure **Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis**, with full speech although Harrison Ford does not provide ndy's voice)· **Rebel Assault** (formerly **Star Wars 3-D** for PC CD and Sega s Mega CD and **Super Empire Strikes Back** for the SNES The atter game is of course a sequel to the groundbreak-ng **Super Star Wars** (JVC/LucasArts SNES the most magnificently cinematic video game n history

The cast of the blockbuster Star Wars series has also hit the gaming world.

Rebel Assault is a 15-level pseudo-3-D shooter that ncludes elements from several of the *Star Wars* fi ms nclud ng the defense of Tatoo ne aga nst mperia forces a battle on the ice planet Hoth, and a daring attack on the Death Star itself Players get to fly a variety of Rebel combat craft n this game nclud ng the T16 Skyhopper X-Wing, and A-Wing fighters The game is also spruced up with fu l-speech/fu l-motion cut scenes though it s not kely to be released unti sometime in 1994.

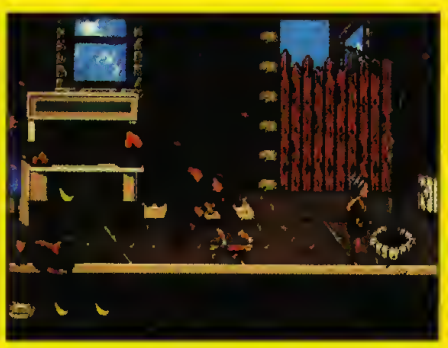
Super Empire Strikes Back s a 16-Meg tour de force that brings the most memorable elements from the best

LEIGH ROTHCHILD: CAPSTONE'S MOVIE MOGUL

by Arnie Katz and Bill Kunkel

"We think we (Intracorp) are the largest DOS-based movie company in the world right now under our Capstone division " Leigh Rothchild told **Electronic Games**. Then he backed up his assertion. "We've done 10-15 previous movie titles and we have more than 15 in the works right now "

A pretty impressive record for a company not generally regarded when the Big Guns of the electronic gaming industry are mentioned. But under Rothchild (yes, he is from *that* Rothchild family), this once obscure computer publisher has acquired the rights to some of the hottest movie properties around—including *Home Alone*, *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* and *Lethal Weapon*. In the process, the cautious but canny Rothchild has turned Capstone into a thriving software division during a period when many software publishers are struggling just to keep their floppy disks above water



Home Alone 2, from Capstone, used the movie's plot to create a unique game.

What is it about movies that has been so appealing to Capstone as source material for game translation? "From a business point of view," Leigh explained, "movies are a very logical product. Computer software is a relatively small industry, but a very competitive one. Having a movie title gives us an immediate marketing sales advantage. I also think that given the plotlines of certain movie properties, such as *Home Alone*, *Aliens* (which we're doing this year), and *Wayne's World*, it's obvious that they're going to make very good, exciting games.

"You know, people go to the movies and, in the case of a *Home Alone* or a *Wayne's World*, it's not enough that they see it, they want to go *beyond* that. They want to go into the land of virtual reality, so to speak, and they want to play in it. And the only way they can do that is with a game."

These days, Leigh finds himself bom-

of the three Star Wars fi ms to the SNES. Battle mperial Walkers on Hoth, learn the secrets of the Jedi Knights with Yoda and, as Luke face off against Darth Vader one-on-one

Mo' Movies, Mo' Movies, Mo' Movies

Although not generally regarded as a publisher on the level of Electronic Arts or LucasArts, Capstone/Intracorp has through intelligent licensing, become one of the major players in the movies-to-games sweepstakes. Its most recent acquisitions include computer versions of **Wayne's World**, **Home Alone 2: Lost in New York**, and **Terminator 2–Cyber Chess.**

Movie-to-game icensing has become so extensive, in fact, that we are even seeing movie licenses based on non-movies! Dark Horse Comics which had the comic book rights to both the Alien and Predator characters, decided, what the heck, let 'em beat one another up, birthing a popular comic series, **Aliens *vs.* Predator** which has now been scooped up by Activision for translation to the SNES. The story, set in the space colony metropolis of New Shanghai in the year 2493, begins when the colonists uncover a cache of Alien eggs underground and send an immediate distress signal to Earth. The signal however is intercepted by a spacecraft belonging to the hunters of the spaceways the Predators, who decide that this could be the greatest hunt yet.

And for fans of star monster *vs.* star monster films, Virgin Games wil be producing **Robocop *vs.* Terminator** another Dark Horse license

Acclaim and its various labels (LJN Arena, and Flying Edge), meanwhile, have poured forth a steady stream of classic film adaptations, including the classic **T2** for the Genesis and magnificent versions of **Alien 3** for the Genesis Mega-CD, NES, Game Gear, Game Boy, and SNES. **Predator 2**, meanwh le an angled topdown shooter is available on the Genesis and Game Gear

Sega also has a couple of hot film licenses on tap for its new Mega-CD system, including **Indiana Jones** and **Batman Returns**.

Even the world of pinbal is getting in on the act, with Midway taking a stab at evoking movie nostalgia with a flipper game based on the 50 s classic, **Creature from the Black Lagoon.**

Movie licenses have never been hotter in the electronic gaming universe **Cliffhanger** based on the already-released Sly Stallone action flick in which he s a park ranger tracking a crashed plane in the high mountains, is coming in al formats this Christmas from Sony **The Last Action Hero**, a Schwarzenegger movie that's sort of a cross between *Sidekicks* and *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, will also be hitting the video screen The latter film wi feature special effects using the Silicon Graphics technology which Sony will feature in this summer's **Bram Stoker's Dracula**. Si icon Graphics were first seen in the film *The Abyss* and allow some tremendous transformation sequences. **Dracula**, by the way, is also coming for all formats.

Virgin Games continues to hold some fascinating cards including the rights to **Demolition Man**, Stallone s next project after *Cliffhanger* The film co-stars Wesley Snipes and wi in all likelihood be Virgin's first 3DO release Also coming from Virgin will be **The Jungle Book** and a game based on *Dragon*.

While game publishers are just as enthusiastic about movie licenses as they were before the video game crash of the mid-80s there s a crucial difference. Today's licenses, by and large are being selected and developed with sensitivity and intel igence.

And what a difference *that* makes.

barded with scripts for new properties. "We get about 20 a month when fly these days, I m always packing a script. n the case of *Home Alone 2*, which we bought a year before it came out, I had to sign in blood to get it; I had to sign about 16 affidavits that wouldn't lose it or reveal the contents."

At 20 scripts a month Leigh is reading approximately 250 a year yet the company's budgets are only tuned-up to produce between ten and twenty projects a year How does he separate the wheat from the chaff?

"First, we want something that we know wil be a proven commodity. Either it's gonna be so strong in terms of what the movie has to offer that we *know* it wil be a hit, or it's already been a hit. If you look at *Wayne*'s *World 2*, which we already have the rights for we wanted to participate in that because the first one was a success. Same with *Home Alone 2* In the case of *Coneheads*, we jumped on that because hey it's Lorne Michaels, who we had success with *Wayne* s *World*, it's Saturday Night Live it's characters who've been part of the American culture for ten years The same thing with the Beverly H lbillies movie. We also jumped on *Terminator 2* this year for a chess game."

Still even when Capstone believes a movie wi be a major hit, they won't bite if they don't see how it can be successfully transformed into a game "*The Firm*, a Tom Cruise movie is a perfect example That's gonna be a fantastic movie, it'll do huge numbers at the box office but we don't believe it would be a good game " There s also the issue of role-playing: does the player want to *be* the character they see on screen? Using the example of a movie about the Manson Family Leigh asks. "Do players really want to *be* Charles Manson?"

Leigh believes there s approximately a 40-50% correlation between box office success and a hit game. That is, if the movie s a hit, 40-50% of that success wi work to the game s benefit. On the flip side the movie business can sometimes hamper a game s success. When Capstone contracted with Orion pictures to do a PC version of the Stephen King thriller *The Dark Half* the game was ready to be released in synch with the film in '92. Problem Orion filed bankruptcy and the film wasn't released until Apri of this year

Of course everyone has their clunkers. Capstone licensed *The Taking of Beverly Hill*s, a movie that flopped The bottom line has to be a good game "You can put anything or anybody you want on the box," says Rothchild "but you can't sell the stuff for very long if there s crap *inside* the box."

GAMES INTO MOVIES

MOVIES TURN TO VIDEO GAMES FOR NEW HEROES

by Bill Kunkel and Joe Funk

For years, video and computer game companies licensed hit movie titles as source material. The film s name and stars were instantly recognizable and gave even an ordinary game a special veneer of quality Today, we're seeing an interesting reversal on that tried-and-true formula: films based on video game characters

Mario Goes Hollyweird

The first major release to feature superstars from the gaming milieu is, of course "Super Mario Bros." from Hollywood Pictures, a division of Disney Films. Starring Bob Hoskins (the private eye from "Who Framed Roger Rabbit") as Mario a role originally to have been played by Danny Devito and John Leguizamo as brother Luigi the famous sibling plumbers are called n when a beautiful paleontologist named Daisy (Samantha Mathis) needs help draining an excavation site Wh le on the job, the Mario Brothers are sucked through a portal into a weird dimension known as Dinohattan Dinohattan (get this) was created eons ago when a meteorite crashed to Earth and enclosed a section of prehistoric Manhattan in an interdimensional pocket universe

Ah but there s trouble in prehistoric paradise· the water supply is dwindling and the reptiles' vile leader, Koopa (portrayed by movie madman extraordinaire Dennis Hopper) must suddenly get his claws on an all-powerful pendant worn by (who else?) Daisy which will allow Dinohattan to merge with our world

Directors Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel writers Parker Bennett, Terry Runte and Ed Solomon are the talents in this Jake Eberts/Roland Joffe production which will have already opened in theaters by the time this article hits the newsstands.

Major question wil someone explain why these guys are called the "Mario Brothers" when only one of them is named Mario? (Or is it Mario and Luigi Mario?)

Double Vision

Next up on the silicon-to-cinema circuit is the fascinating **Double Dragon** project, based on the smash arcade and home video game series The biggest budget entry yet from Imperial Entertainment, representative Ash Shah was just about to complete casting prior to a June shoot.

The plot is both compelling and true to the spirit of the **DD** games. Its origins lay a thousand years in the past when a group of evil Chinese warlords united their forces in order to pillage a great city In order to save his people the king of the city gave up his life to create a magical medallion the Double Dragon which provided his sons with mystical powers that enabled them to vanquish the warlords.

The scene then flashes forward to the year 2007 seven years after an earthquake dumped half of L.A.—including Beverly H ls and Hollywood—into the Pacific. In the post-apocalyptic chaos, street gangs took control of the city During the daylight hours things are peacefu , but once night falls, citizens move indoors as gang violence rages like a firestorm through the shattered metropolis. Enter the vi lainous Koga Shuko a shadowy corporate figure bent on stripping the city of its remaining resources His plan· unite the gangs under his control and establish complete control. To this end, he dispatches his beautifu Amazon ieutenant, Lash to the Tibetan monastery where the Double Dragon medallion is rumored to be hidden Though Lash is only able to retrieve half of the sacred relic, it is stil sufficient to metamorphosize Shuko into the Shadow Boss, a ghostly powerhouse obsessed with procuring the remaining medallion piece—which just happens to hang around the neck of the lovely Satori, teacher and guardian to our heroes, Billy and Jimmy Lee.

The film is being shot in L.A. and Cleveland—where the infamous Cuyahoga River—a body of water once so polluted it caught fire wi stand in for the movie s Hollywood River, a new body of "water" which formed as a result of the upheaval

The fx promise to be eye-popping, combining traditional matte backgrounds and state-of-the-art digital composite technology to create some major visual effects During one scene Shuko assumes the body of Switchblade who's sort of a cross between Freddy Krueger and Bruce Lee Later he becomes Tower a 7'6" monster and finally transforms nto Torpedo a brawler equipped with steel skeletal implants.

The director is Jim Yukich one of the last of the great first-generation rock video directors to helm a feature film Yukich resonated to the film s concept and video game ambiance, and his high-spot video style should serve the subject matter perfectly

Street Fightin' Man

One of the most anticipated new film-from-video game projects is Capcom s licensing of **Street Fighter** to an as-yet-unnamed major studio. At press time Capcom was unable to make any comment on the project, other than to tell **EG** that the deal would be announced at this year's Cannes Film Festival. Industry scuttlebutt says Ed Pressman holds the rights, but no one is sure which studio wil wind up with this plum project. One of **Street Fighter**'s strongest sel ing points is that its characters have already been extensively role-played by so many gamers across the world Everyone has his personal favorite fighter and interest in this film is bound to be quite high considering the game s popularity

Stay tuned for further details on these and other game-to-movie projects in upcoming issues of **EG**.

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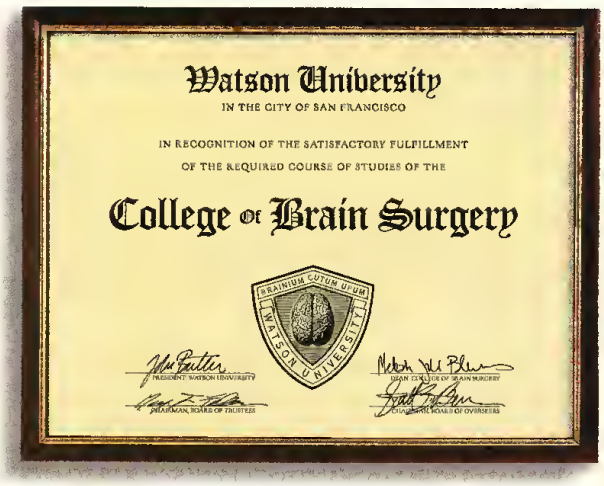

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EG Directory: State-of-the-Art PC Games

by the Editors of Electronic Games

No phrase is more powerful in computer gaming than "state-of-the-art." In a field where innovation is often the measure of critical and financial success, it is the highest praise a computer game can receive.

It's amazing that such a popular term is so hard to define. That's because the definition constantly changes. Every time a cutting edge product hits the retail market, it alters the perception of what is truly state of the art. (Doubters should boot up the top entertainment programs of 1988, a mere five years ago.)

When **EG**'s editors talk about game trends, the debate about software benchmarks always carries the conversations deep into the night. The distillation of those hammer-and-tongs arguments is this special section. It represents the consensus of **EG**'s editors about what is state-of-the-art in computer gaming right now, mid-1993.

First doesn't always mean best. Many successful computer games perfect elements introduced by earlier programs. A title could rate "95" without being on the cutting edge in design or implementation. These, then, are the games that are exploring new territory.

The Best Adventures/RPGs

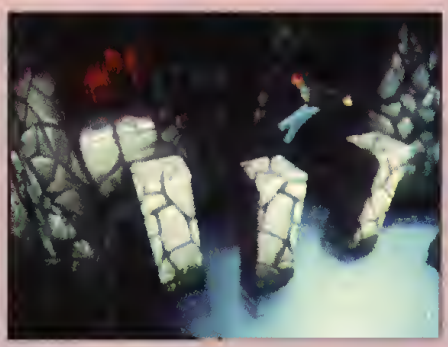
Ever-increasing sophistication in content and form keeps this category at the top of the popularity list among compugamers. The competition is so intense that a week seldom passes without a new ground-breaking title.

The editors had a hard time narrowing down the candidates to five outstanding games. One thing's likely: the list will be substantially different when **EG** reviews state-of-the-art at the end of the year.

Alone in the Dark (I-Motion)

Truly spooky games are a hot new item in the computer software world, and **Alone in the Dark** represents absolute state-of-the-art in this genre. The game employs the "Mirror World" type of virtual reality format in which users manipulate an on-screen surrogate who moves about a creepy mansion infested with ghouls, harpies, killer chickens and a variety of other unusual horrors. The polygon graphics are magnificent, the game's experiential content is remarkable, and the music is top-notch.

A wide variety of cinematic camera angles are employed as the player's mirror image (male or female) discovers items ranging from rifles to books containing valuable information, all of which will prove essential in surviving a night in this mansion from hell.

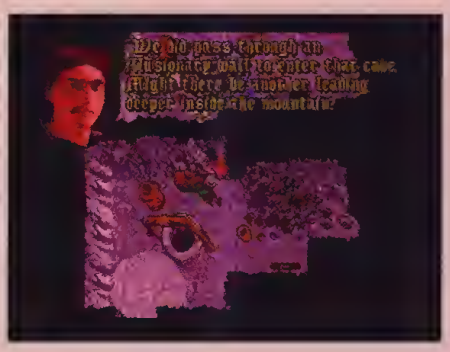


As Edward Carnby, players must try their best to survive Alone in the Dark.

Ultima 7, Part 2: Serpent Isle (Origin)

Serpent Isle was a pretty daring proposition from the beginning; after all, no **Ultima** entry had ever before been broken up into mini-chapters. In addition to the innovative presentation, the graphics and interface have both been fine tuned to razor's edge sharpness. Characters, for example, appear in close-up, amazingly lifelike portraits, using enhanced speech (along with improved sound effects and a spellbinding musical score) to communicate. Finally, the inventory system has been kicked up several notches, with users able to view their character wearing or bearing the armor, clothing and weapons selected for them.

Ultima has always been a leader in this genre, and **Serpent Isle** is just the latest, greatest example.



Ultima VII Part Two continues to lead the Avatar on adventurous quests.

Dark Seed (Cyberdreams)

Imagine a cross between the films *D.O.A.* and *Alien*—an extraterrestrial race has implanted a seed within the brain of a science fiction writer and he has a matter of days to free himself before it bursts forth from his skull, rendering him pretty much non-functional.

But while the theme is compelling, it's the animation and artwork, based on extensive sketches by Swiss artist H.R. Giger (creator of the original *Alien*) that drives this breakthrough horror/sci-fi title. The contrast between scenes staged on ordinary streets and in the writer's Victorian home, and the nightmarish visuals used to convey the aliens' environment make for striking moments.

Freddie Pharkas, Frontier Pharmacist (Sierra)

It's amazing it took so long for a major, big-budget adventure to be set in the Old West. **Freddie Pharkas**, from the madcap mind of **Leisure Suit Larry** creator Al Lowe, along with Josh Mandel, is a tongue-in-cheek puzzle-driven cowboy adventure in which the player—as Freddie, a gunslinger-turned-druggist—must

Freddy has a long but humorous journey to take through the Old Wild West.

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deal with a series of mysterious plagues which are lowering the quality of life in his adopted town.

There's never been a game quite like this, but it isn't just the innovative theme that earned **Freddie Pharkas, Frontier Pharmacist** its position here. The graphics, the animation, the delightfully sophomoric humor, and the overall presentation also qualify this game for inclusion in our state-of-the-art pantheon.

Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes (Electronic Arts)

Lost Files recreates the lush, Victorian world of Sherlock Holmes and Watson with remarkable fidelity in terms of both its scripting and its gorgeous visual replication. From Mrs. Hudson's genteel apartment to the London underworld of the Baker Street Irregulars, the graphics and play mechanics are an excellent example of pushing the envelope. Mythos Software's interface, while hardly revolutionary, is quite user-friendly, with 12 categories of commands (Look, Move, Talk, Pick Up, Journal, Files, Inventory, etc.) maintained at the bottom of the screen.

The set pieces have a delicate, soft-edged realism that, at times, challenges even Virgin's **The 7th Guest**, and the plot (set in 1888), which centers around a murder that may have been committed by Jack the Ripper, provides both an excellent mystery and some nice chills.

The Best Action/Action-Strategy Games

The arcades and video games once supplied many of the designs for computer action contests. That's no longer true. Few cartridges now migrate to disk, and computer translations of coin-ops have become rare events.

Those who want pure action generally gravitate to the cartridge systems, which are specially configured for real-time action. Computerists usually favor programs that balance action with some strategic scope.

B.J. is at it again in Deutschland. This time, he must find the Spear of Destiny.

Spear of Destiny (FormGen)

Wolfenstein 3-D was a thrashed-out, visceral wake-up call to computer gamers lulled by endless puzzle dungeons and strategy games. Nothing gets a gamer's blood pumping like putting a couple of Nazis to sleep, permanent-like, and **Wolfenstein**'s virtual reality-based combination of a maze game and a first-person shooter took the decade-old Silas Warner Apple II topdown classic, **Castle Wolfenstein**, and dragged it shrieking and spurting blood into the world of state-of-the-art computer technology.

Spear of Destiny is the polished, slicked-up sequel to **Wolfie-3-D**, and it maintains the pulse-pounding game play of the original in a cleaner, more attractive package. For innovation *and* presentation, this is definitely what state of the art action gamers are into.

Lemmings 2 adds more puzzles and more lemmings to guide to safety!

Lemmings 2: The Tribes (Psygnosis)

The original **Lemmings** was a cult sensation that left Lemmingites salivating for a sequel. The long-awaited follow-up, **The Tribes**, is that rarest of gems: a sequel that captures all the appeal of the original while adding unique and compelling ideas of its own.

Lemmings 2 is an action-oriented puzzle quest (how's that for an interesting category?) in which the player must guide the dozen tribes of Lemmings across Lemming Island in order to locate an ancient talisman which is the only thing that can save their race. There are Highland Lemmings, Beach Bum Lemmings, Sports Lemmings, and even Circus Lemmings, each with their own particular talents, which the player must exploit to maximum potential in order to survive the mission.

The delightful sense of humor and the charming visual portrayals of the cute little critters are retained from the original, while the sequel's added strategy component gains this title unquestioned entry into state-of-the-art society.

The Incredible Machine (Dynamix)

This may be the most offbeat game of the year—and that kind of originality is worth its weight in gold on the state-of-the-art standard. Jeff Tunnell, former head honcho at Dynamix, where he designed such classics as **Rise of the Dragon** and **Heart of China**, released **The Incredible Machine** as the debut product of his new development house, Jeff Tunnell Productions. Unlike his earlier successes, however, **Incredible Machine** is not an adventure, but a marvelous, Rube Goldberg-inspired kinetic puzzle contest in which users employ everything from conveyor belts, gears, and helium balloons to cannons, see-saws and monkey-powered bicycles.

Ultrabots (Nova Logic/Electronic Arts)

Games featuring manned, giant robots have been popular for about a decade, with computer games producing simulations every heavy metal step of the way. **Ultrabots** is the finest such program yet produced, surpassing even the action at a **BattleTech** center (if not the multiple-player competition).

The interesting theme is that the Earth has been invaded by aliens in mechanized armor. The Ultrabots totally trash our primitive weaponry (nothing short of a nuke will stop them) and our scientists are forced to cannibalize sections of the three armor classes (Scouts, Humanoids and Scorpions) in order to make our own mechanical super-suits and level out the vast playing field.

Ultrabots plants the player in a robotic shell with plenty of fighting ability.

The game features excellent background detail, the best graphics ever seen on a game of this type, and even wins points for its packaging. A tri-sectioned, "Transformer"-style box greets the consumer and adds authenticity.

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Billions of people are counting on you to destroy enemy warships and minefields, and to clear the way through evil enemy territory to a safe, new solar system.

But beware! Fuel and ammunition are limited. Your ruthless opponents outgun you four to one. And time is running out!

Screen shots shown are from the Amiga version of the game. Game program © 1992 Ocean Software Limited.

The name of the game

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Electronic Arts
(Distributor)
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San Mateo, CA
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Terminator 2029 (Bethesda)

Combat exo-skeletons are a hot subject right now, with player-characters suiting up in assault armor once again in V.J. Lakshman's surprise smash, **Terminator 2029**, based on an untold chapter in the Terminator saga that takes place during the war between Skynet's cyborg warriors and John Connor's resistance forces. After breaking into Skynet Central Command, Connor's soldiers discover a suit of A.C.E. (Advanced Cybernetic Exoskeleton) battle armor. Problem: the suit only works when it's allowed to interface directly with the wearer's central nervous system (that's gotta hurt). The solution: you've passed the test displaying sufficient tolerance for the armor.

The graphics are hot, the plot is in perfect harmony with the thematic material, and the action is as compelling as anything on a PC today.

The Best Sports Simulations

Only adventures sell more copies than games derived from team and individual athletic contests. Variety is the main reason. The sports category, including both action-oriented and statistically based games, has the second-highest sales of any computer entertainments.

The boys of summer can be seen on the big screen in Tony LaRussa Baseball II.

Tony LaRussa Baseball II (SSI)

When it comes to state-of-the-art computer baseball, from swinging the bat to keeping the stats, no other program belongs in the same ballpark as this project from Stormfront (formerly Beyond Software, creators of the original LaRussa game).

Created with extensive input from LaRussa himself, the strategy components are superb (with the best manager-making program ever devised), the stat base (from the highly respected sabremetricians at Stats Inc.) is phenomenal, and the special features are nearly limitless. The usual stuff is all here, of course: instant replay, play-by-play announcing (delivered by Ron Barr), and multiple camera angles. Then throw in 11 classic stadia, each produced in wide-screen detail, right down to the ads on the ballpark walls; full-color portraits of each player; rosters that expand to 40 players after September 1st; and the best player rating system in the business.

Links 386 Pro (Access)

The Golf War was, like most conflicts, hell. No, not the Gulf War—the GOLF War. You know, the period when every company in the software publishing business had its own golf simulation? Well, when the dust settled in the software sandtraps, there were only three hardy survivors: **Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf & Course Design** (Accolade), **PGA Tour Golf** (Electronic Arts) and **Links** (Access).

All of these products clearly have their virtues and scores of fans, but when it comes to state-of-the-art, we have to defer to the eye-popping realism of Access' latest production, **Links 386 Pro** for the higher-powered PCs. The Access team photographs virtually every foot of every course it simulates and the result is a game that plays well and looks like a million dollars.

If you can't afford a house on a golf course, **Links 386 Pro** is a pretty fair compromise—and you don't even have to worry about broken windows!

Front Page Sports: Football (Dynamix)

Dynamix's first foray into sports simulation may have lacked an element or two—like an NFL or NFLPA license—but in terms of visual presentation, this game hits like a blindside sack thrown by a 300 lb middle linebacker. The visuals and animations are superb—the first football simulation one could actually call pretty.

The game also has the requisite options and features: instant replays from a player-controlled floating camera; unlimited consecutive seasons (watch players grow old and die); drafting; trading; over 300 stat categories; over 200 stock plays as well as a design-your-own feature; training camp; free agents; and much more.

The meat-and-potatoes here, however, is the stunning visual presentation, backed up with a solid gridiron program.

World Circuit (MicroProse)

Not since Electronic Arts' Indy 500 has a computer racing simulation demonstrated such a major leap forward in graphics, animation and playability. A Grand Prix simulation, gamers compete in the streets of Phoenix, Monaco, Mexico City, and the 13 other GP tracks. The 25 computer-controlled competing drivers showing sufficient AI-derived styles also make this circuit simulation a lot of fun.

Multiple camera angles, instant replays, user-controlled car modifications, as well as the other genre features are all present and ready to rev in this hot-looking, slick-playing racing competition.

Put this baby in gear and hit the streets of some of the world's most exotic cities (how did Phoenix get on this circuit, anyway?) in the state-of-the-art GP simulation.

The greatest player in the game now floats onto computer screens in 3-D.

Michael Jordan In-Flight
(Electronic Arts)

If at first you don't succeed, we are told, try, try again. Clearly, Electronic Arts has taken that axiom to heart. The original release of **Jordan In-Flight** was, to put it bluntly, a mess. An attempt to produce a basketball game that took users onto the court, its reach exceeded its grasp. This second shot, however, comes a lot closer to hitting the mark and demonstrates where basketball games may be going in the near future.

The new **In-Flight** uses a lot of the same SNES-inspired effects that doomed the original—particularly the Mode-7 style rotation of the court—and even adds a major new gimmick. But instead of floundering, this new version soars. The video sim technology used to capture the images of Jordan and his anonymous opponents in this three-on-three, half-court game is successful at integrating the player into the game play.

The package loses environmental points, however; for a two-disk product with limited documentation, did we really need a box big enough to transport a cinderblock in?

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The Best Simulators

These are the thinking player's action games. The intimate perspective, usually some form of first-person, and real-time interaction give simulators an immediacy and emotional wallop that turns gamers into fanatics.

Although some believe that simulators won't improve much until the next hardware generation appears, there are other aspects of state of the arts. Many of the games in this category move beyond mere accuracy to deliver a full-spectrum vicarious experience!

Strike Eagle III (MicroProse)

MicroProse has just about the best reputation in the combat flight sim field because Bill Steely and Sid Meier understand something about the majority of simulation gamers: we only want to mess with the fun stuff. You can take those gauges and navigational instruments and dump them over the nearest Air Force base; most gamers are happy if their aircraft flies well with a joystick, has lots of missiles on board, and offers a nice variety of targets to blow into flinders.

This time out, however, MicroProse decided to satisfy both the weekend warriors and the simulator mavens by offering a Standard and Authentic Mode. The former defaults a lot of the heavy duty stuff while the Authentic setting gives the user total control over the aircraft.

Strike Eagle III is the latest and greatest iteration of the first really important computer combat flight sim, the original **F-15 Strike Eagle**. The graphics are so realistic, even the *clouds* look real!

Take to the skies in an advanced plane and see how you handle the pressure.

Strike Commander (Origin)

Although there has been some disappointment in this long-delayed game within the industry, it is still a magnificent piece of work. Chris Roberts, who rocked the software world with the **Wing Commander** game and data disks, brings the action closer to the ground in this prequel which stresses air-to-ground combat along with the more traditional dogfights, thus giving gamers a lot more to look at than blue sky.

Get a bead on the bad guy and collect a handsome reward for taking him out!

The ships themselves are incredible, worthy of a feature film, and the cut scenes are among the most spectacular ever seen. The only complaint has been that even some 486-owners are having problems getting **Strike Commander** to run at mach-plus speeds.

Released simultaneously is the **Strike Commander Speech Pack** which gives voice to the program, tremendously enhancing the entire project. For flight sim fans who want a bit more, this game will certainly satisfy.

A time when the world seemed more fantastic: and anything was possible!

Journey back in time to the year 1957 on an expedition to the dark heart of the Amazon Basin. A desparate, crazed message sends you on a perilous search through a land where legends come to life, danger hides behind every corner, and incredible treasures wait to be discovered.

AMAZON is designed in the style of the serials of the 1940's and 50's such as Flash Gordon, The Lost City, and Rocketman.

These serials were made up of intriguing, fast paced episodes which placed the hero in unbelievable peril. AMAZON contains 14 exciting episodes filled with plot twists, mysterious characters and heart stopping cliff-hangers. You haven't had this much fun since the drive-in days!

Metal monsters seek your destruction!*

X-Wing (LucasArts)

LucasArts finally brings the joys of *Star Wars* to PCs with **X-Wing**, by Lawrence Holland and Edward Kilham. Anyone who thinks **StarFox** (Nintendo/SNES) is hot stuff in terms of sci-fi games using polygon technology, prepare to drop your jaw.

The Rebellion needs pilots, so it's time to test your skill in an X-Wing, A-Wing, or Y-Wing style craft (each offering 17 cockpit perspectives) by flying through a maze of rings, refighting (in a simulation-within-a-simulation) classic historical encounters with Imperial Forces, or leaving the security of sim-simulation for some *Star Wars* action, including a climactic attack on the Death Star.

Do your part in stopping the Dark Side and help the Rebel Alliance survive.

The graphics, speech (taken directly from the films), soundtrack (based, of course, on John Williams' score), cut scenes, and play action all sublimely describe what state of the art is all about.

MegaFortress (Three Sixty)

The most cinematic of the combat flight simulators, **MegaFortress** is based on Dale Brown's cult classic, "Flight of the Old Dog." The plot line that drives the book, and this game, is irresistible: in order to get a strategic 200 ton payload behind radar-fortified Iraqi lines, an old B52H Stratofortress is modified with radar-absorbing fibersteel skin, the nose of an SST, and just about every piece of cutting edge technology available in contemporary air warfare. The only thing that's missing is a tough pilot!

This simulation features a wealth of realistic details which greatly enhance the game's experiential quotient, including a Co-pilot, Navigator, and other onboard crew members; multiple missions, including training in Nevada, which were designed by Brown himself; and some great visuals.

Also included is the paperback version of Dale Brown's book; it is a nice addition that really helps involve the user in the story line.

Piloting a Comanche helicopter will test your nerves, stamina and reflexes!

Comanche: Maximum Overkill (NovaLogic)

No game has ever captured the mega-fractal visual presentation of **Comanche: Maximum Overkill** and its first Mission Disk. Players soar through mountain passes, over shorelines, and past a rainbow of alternative topography in a graphic display that suggests technology at its finest. The terrain's the thing in this high-speed cockpit combat sim, with textured landscapes that produce an unforgettable effect on the gamer.

Comanche: Maximum Overkill is more of a streamlined, arcade-type experience than simulators such as **Falcon 3.0** or **Strike Eagle III**, but it's still fantastic.

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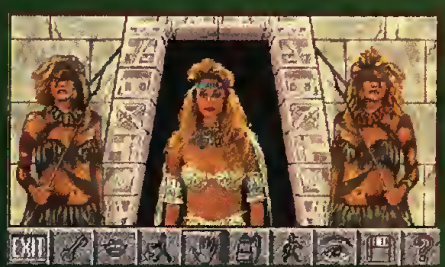

Gasp in disbelief at the lost tribe of Amazon women!*

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The Best Strategy Games

Few categories have progressed as remarkably as this one. Multi-player computer games haven't caught on the way some publishers hoped, but quantum leaps in AI (artificial intelligence) have made solitaire play-sessions much more satisfying.

Electronic versions of board games and programs derived from abstract contests like **Reversi** dominated the 1980s. Now publishers are bringing forth complex, yet playable, solitaire and multi-player contests that use the computer to fully immerse the computerist in the situation.

Battle Chess 4000 (InterPlay)

The latest, and most visually spectacular of InterPlay's **BattleChess** series, this time the pieces are science fictional and instead of using swords and maces, dispatch enemies with laser beams.

The chess game has been beefed up, too, with an opening library of 300,000 moves, Artificial Intelligence (it learns, baby, it learns), a multitude of play levels with over 12 megabytes of sound and SVGA graphics (memory hog). It will even replay an entire game, and recognizes and announces openings (rather smugly, we thought).

By now, this is one of the most beloved Chess series around, and if you've got a system with plenty of horsepower, this baby knows what to do with it. The game is definitely state-of-the-art in terms of visually presenting chess.

Battle Chess 4000 makes the age-old strategy game much more exciting.

Caesar (Impressions)

SimCity meets Ancient Rome, and the folks at Impressions impressed the gaming cognoscenti by outdoing even Maxis at the city-building business. The graphics here are excellent, the interface is slick as machine oil, and the program's historical context is fascinating.

To misquote Mel Brooks in *History of the World, Part I*: "It's *good* to be Caesar." It's even painlessly educational, but don't tell anyone.

Civilization (MicroProse)

God simulations have been another hot category in recent months, and Sid Meier's elegant program, which begins at the dawn of recorded history, allows the user to evolve through about six millennia while matching wits with the great men of those many eras.

If you ruled the world, what would it be like? How would you deal with the likes of Napoleon, Julius Caesar, or Ghengis Khan?

These are the questions that propel **Civilization** forward, and it ranks among the most enlightening game experiences anyone has ever produced.

Players can try their hands at creating and maintaining a healthy society.

Dune II (Westwood/Virgin)

Virgin Games, a publisher that has not been overwhelmingly lucky with developers in the past, came up smelling like roses when they picked up not one but two games based on Frank Herbert's *Dune* (and the excellent David Lynch film of the same name) from different developers on different continents. The first *Dune* game was produced by Cryo, a French developer who turned out an excellent piece of work. With Westwood's entry, **Dune II**, however, Virgin Games struck pure gold. Strategy, economic leverage, and outright warfare are the order of the day as Emperor Frederick IV sets the ruling houses of Arrakis—Atreides, Ordos, and Harkonnen—at one anothers' throats for control of the planet and the spice which is mined there.

This is a great blend of the many things which make up a good strategy or adventure, from graphics to game play.

Populous 2 (Electronic Arts)

The original **Populous** was the very first God game, with players building a world from humble beginnings, attracting worshippers, and going forth to spread the seeds of an empire. Many players, however, had problems with the cumbersome icon-based command system and interface in general.

Populous 2 cleans up the rough spots from the original and, in doing so, regains its stature as a state-of-the-art product. Less smart than **Civilization**, this is more of an electronic board game than a philosophical experience.

The Best Military Simulations

Electronic military simulations have begun to look past the narrow limitations of the conventional hex-grid wargame. Although this treatment of armed conflict is still widely used, many publishers have broken with tradition to provide stimulating new perspectives on classic battles and what-if wars.

Conquest of Japan (Impressions)

Although several games have tried to replicate the look and feel of true miniatures wargaming, none has done so as successfully as **Conquest Of Japan.** Because the system is also coupled with real-time play, it actually improves upon the original. **COJ** achieves this state-of-the-art mastery through some of the best algorithms on the market. Five times per second, the initiative, moral, movement, collision and reload sequences are tested for every individual soldier on the battlefield.

Conquest of Japan puts gamers in an epic simulation of Samurai warfare.

Further, each soldier does not blindly follow the orders given by the player, but is affected by low morale and other tactical factors. The incumbent effect is to reinforce the difficulties of actual command and control for thousands of troops, unlike many games which allow micro-management and omnipotence for player generals. This and other features make **Conquest of Japan** a bold entry in the military sim category, as well as a insightful look at the history of warfare.

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Conquered Kingdoms provides players with fantasy elements in strategic war.

Conquered Kingdoms (QQP)

Decidedly a non-traditional wargame, **Conquered Kingdoms** is not the first product to attempt to expose players to fantasy characters in feudal-type combat. **CK** outshines its predecessors on two major levels, however: the balance of play offered in the unit mix and the strength of the Artificial Intelligence routines. Similar to chess without the constraints of board spacing or set movement, each unit type is both deadly to some units and as vulnerable as Achilles' heel to others. This forces players to constantly be aware of the combined arms concept and vary their unit mix based on both mission objectives and the composition of enemy forces. Finally, the campaign system is beautifully designed to avoid *deus ex machina* comebacks when players have poorly managed their resources.

Relive the intense battles of WWII in Three Sixty's Operation Market Garden.

V For Victory: Operation Market Garden (Three Sixty)

This new series of games is most notable for their usage of SVGA graphics and superior game interface. Most traditional wargames require extensive study of charts and tables to ascertain the most simple operations. **V For Victory**'s pull down menu system encourages players to learn by doing, yet there is sufficient detail in the design to avoid any accusations of the game itself being too simplistic. **V4V**'s combat system employs nine different types of attacks so players can realistically probe enemy positions prior to planning assaults, without having to commit to find out whether one is overwhelmed or not. Further, these games offer the best handling of weather and limited intelligence constraints on the market. Bully for accurate Fog of War!

Creating an aquarium has never been this easy! El-Fish shows you how.

The Best Recreational Software

Electronic Games has always covered entertainment in the broadest sense, including programs that are fun in a leisure-time setting but are not truly games. The huge expansion in computer RAM and ROM, coupled with the introduction of super VGA graphics and superior sound, has opened new vistas for recreational software.

El-Fish (Maxis)

Who would have thought that a program about building and stocking a simulated fishtank would be entertaining, much less state of the art. Once again, however, Maxis defies the cynics and has created a computer experience capable of producing unqualified user-pleasure.

Breed fish, subject them to your evolutionary whims, select their animation patterns, then design the tank. When the surprisingly simple process is completed, the player pushes a metaphoric button and experiences one of the neatest visual treats they are ever likely to receive. The fish are beautiful, the tank features are endless, and the swim patterns are authentic; the fish can even be fed by tapping some simulated fish food onto the surface.

Stunt Island (Disney)

There are a million flight simulators out there, but the beauty of this program is that it allows the user to perform stunts, film them, and use them to produce mini-films. Tremendously innovative, creative as hell, and great fun to play, **Stunt Island** makes users wish that Disney would turn out more products. It's part simulator, part movie studio, and somewhere in there is a great toy. There are nearly 50 different types of aircraft available, from biplanes to commercial airliners, and plenty of locations to fly them over.

The program is sufficiently modular in that any of the component features can be defaulted while the user becomes familiar with one skill area. Don't be fooled: this is *not* just for kids!

Directing scenes and adding sound effects are just a part of Stunt Island.

Wacky Funsters (Tsunami)

In the tradition of **Dr. Floyd's Desktop Toys** (MicroProse) and **The Laffer Utilities** (Sierra) comes **Whacky Funsters**, a collection of satirical mini-games that are genuinely funny as well as fun.

These are games meant to be stored innocently on one's hard drive (preferably at work), where they can be summoned up at a moment's notice, played quickly, then exited before a supervisor comes strolling by.

In one of the six mini-games (**Rambi vs. Blambo**), the player guides a baby deer apparently on steroids through the woods as he tracks down hunters. In **Roadkill**, the theme of the movie *Deathrace: 2000* becomes grimly humorous reality.

The games all share a decidedly sick sense of humor, so consider yourselves warned—or hyped, as the case may be.

State of the Future

That's the state of the computer gaming art as **EG**'s July issue goes to press. These games set the standards for new software. State-of-the-art never stands still. Neither does **EG**. From now on, we'll survey state-of-the-art every six months.

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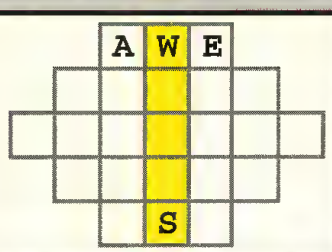
You know the drill: In this contest you don't rely on the luck-of-the draw. You determine if you win or not. You win by outscoring others in a game of skill. If you can add numbers, do crosswords and have persistence, then you have what it takes.

How to win: Can you solve the puzzle below? It looks very simple but it's only the start (most won't even try!). Each puzzle gets a little harder. But this time it's all up to you. Stay in to the end with the highest score and you win! Do you have what it takes? Try your hand and see.

Directions: Fill in the Mystery Word Grid with the correct words (going across) that spell out the Mystery Word down the middle. Hint: use the mystery word clue.

In the future: There will be four more puzzles at $2.00 each and one tie-breaker at $1.50. You will have three weeks to solve each puzzle (suspense is part of the game!). We don't know how many people will enter but typically 47% will advance through Phase I, 30% through Phase II, 25% through Phase III, and 20% through Phase IV. The tie-breaker determines the winner. If players are still tied they will each receive the grand prize they are playing for.

Mystery Word Grid



WORD LIST

FRONT	ZOO	LINKS	ACE	MIGHT
ASK	TABLE	FIT	GAMES	THE
NEBULAR	RUNNING	CAPTAIN	TRILOGY	CARRIER
SPACE	AWE	ROGUE	FAR	PRINT
ANT	GREAT	JET	FIGHT	WIN

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Making the Cut:

Fore! Handicapping Golf Games

by Ed Dille

Teeing Off

In the tough economic climate we all endure, it is often difficult to smell the roses and invest the time (and/or money) to play a good round of golf. Granted, the game is not everyone's cup of tea, but it offers something that most other professional sports do not, the opportunity to test one's own skills on the same PGA courses that host national tournaments. If one lives close to any of these courses, or is willing to travel to

Golf games and simulations have been popular since the advent of computers.

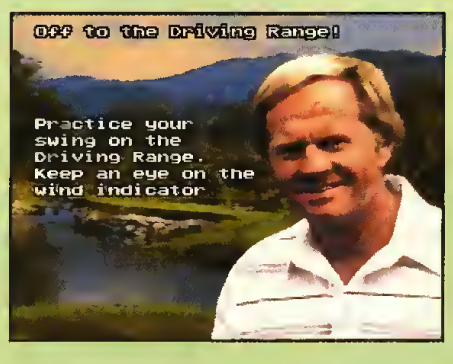
play one of them, any given Sunday will find a queue of hackers mingling with established players to plunk down hard earned cash for greens fees. Considering that courses like Sawgrass and Pebble Beach charge between $75 and $200 per round (the cart is often extra), it is not surprising that many enthusiasts limit their excursions to these types of courses to once or twice a millennium.

Obviously, these brief sojourns cannot quench the fever, so many players also turn to less expensive fulfillment, as offered by one or more of the many fine simulations available for home computers and video game machines.

In the beginning, players who wished to enjoy the game of golf without cleaning up their clubs were limited to overhead perspective games. Several early coin-ops used this approach and some are still found (less in arcades than in 19th hole lounges) in operation today. These games showed the entire hole from a bird's eye perspective and the player selected a club and swung away with a roller track ball. Obligingly, the ball would leap into the foreground while the background scrolled underneath it and receded again to allow the player to set up a second shot. The objective was to continue to make par or below to keep the quarter alive, and no computer opponents were available. Surprisingly, derivatives of this simplistic approach also endured to make appearances on video game machines. An example of such a product was NEC's **Power Golf** for the original TurboGrafx-16.

Not surprisingly, players wanted more than what this type of game had to offer. As such, one of the early breakthrough golf games for the C-64 and Atari was Accolade's **Mean 18**. This was the first popular golf game to incorporate the perspective utilized by most of its successors (i.e., standing behind the digitized character as it plays). **Mean 18** survived in the top slot for a long time, finally being usurped by Access' **World Class Leaderboard** (**WCL**).

WCL was noteworthy because of the greater number of play options it offered and, more significantly, because of its innovative Realsound applications. In those days before add-on sound cards, the most abysmal aspect of every program was the clunky beeps and boops that emanated from the internal speakers. Access' patented process introduced some of the only coherent sound bytes during that era. Birds chirped in the background and balls "plopped" into the water.



A famous face from the sport can only help boost the quality of the simulation.

The familiar down-the-fairway view is enhanced with each new golf game.

Given that Accolade and Access established themselves as the first true innovators for this type of simulation, one expects to find their follow-up developments at the top of the list today. In fact, they are, but it took each company almost a decade to refine their craft.

In the Fairway

Accolade was the first to break out of the pack in the second round of the tournament of champions, with their Christmas 1990 introduction of **Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Golf & Course Design**. The basic game allowed a combination of up to four human or computer players to compete in regular or "skins" play (a twist to the game that wasn't around when earlier products were developed).

Skill levels for the computer opponents varied (both genders were represented), and one had the option of playing against the Golden Bear himself, if desired. The program even allowed Jack to duff one now and then, a tribute to his humility and a touch that kept the simulation very human. Play mechanics were familiar, with players timing their stroke and wrist snap on a sliding power bar

until one reached the green There a topographical grid overlay allowed players to read the greens more accurately than ever before and eliminated all "pancake" green products forever True tournament play was stil excluded but the program more than made up for it with the inclusion of a full featured Course Design module.

Player-designers began with a topographical plot of land in one of three basic settings: mountain, park land or seascape. Using an overhead display and a mouse, it was possible to rough out 18 holes in a matter of minutes by plotting the centerline of each hole and any doglegs. Along the way, a handy display provided length and current par for the hole being plotted, as well as a cumulative for the course up to that point. Each hole was then individualized by editing greens, roughs and fairways, adding bunkers, water hazards, trees, rocks and even houses. Players could locate tees and even specify up to five pin placements, which the computer then

Nicklaus' Signature Edition offers many additional design features and options.

randomly selected from each time the design was played.

The program provided unlimited flexibility for players to design their favorite local courses and was also supported by numerous add-on disks. Accolade sponsored design contests and a large following sprang up on national BBS's like the Prodigy network.

Although **Ultimate** then remained the only product that boasted the course design feature, it was constrained by low resolution, a limited palette and poor sound card support. Consequently, when Access released **Links** (discussed later) in 1991, with near photographic quality digitized graphics and superlative sound support, Accolade lost a significant portion of their market. In response, they developed **Jack Nicklaus Golf & Course Design: Signature Edition.**

Signature treats players to VGA graphics and a greatly expanded interface for the design module. Virtually any object can be created using a palette of 176 colors, six brush styles and seven stroke types. Further, the program allows players with a penchant for paint programs to import any file with an .LBM or .PCX extension. In addition to standard clip art support, Accolade's BBS (408-296-8800 1200/2400 baud, 408-296-8810 9600 baud) acts as a clearing house for user generated images and course designs.

Prodigy has also expanded its support of Accolade with **Signature**'s introduction, by hosting on-line tournament play for an additional $7.95 per month. As of January of this year, some 2500 users had signed up for this service. Players compete in Opens, with up to 149 contestants, or organized Invitationals with

Jack's game allows players to hone their swing on the driving range.

4-32 players of their choice. Further, tournament courses may be downloaded and played off-line, a major cost savings to those with excessive BBS charges. The only requirement is that players post their scores daily to keep the leader board current and the files are arranged to allow only one play, to preclude cheaters.

The mechanics of **Signature** are virtually identical to **Ultimate**, but players do have some expanded options. Stand alone tournament play is now supported and players may also customize the computer golfers by dictating their proficiency with each club. Statistics for each round

Making the Cut:
Fore! Handicapping Golf Games

are now kept and the program has added other bells and whistles, such as a Hole in One Club listing.

A scaled down version of the Signature edition is now also available for the Sega Genesis. **Jack Nicklaus Power Chal-**

Links 386 Pro, by Access, takes golf on the screen to a new and exciting level.

lenge Golf (**PCG**, reviewed in the June issue of **EG**) is the same game as its big brother, sans the course design features. **PCG** comes with two courses, Sherwood Country club and English Turn Golf and Country club. The default method of play is Championship Skins but players may also elect for a normal round or tournament play on either

The additional course disks available for Links 386 provide hours of enjoyment.

course for 1-4 rounds. Accolade's refinements are welcomed, and they still reign supreme in the course design arena, but Access' design team has not been resting on their laurels either.

When **Links** first appeared, it revolutionized the graphic standard for sports simulations. In recreating Torrey Pines South (initially the only course that came with the game), Access programmers used over 500 ground and aerial photographs, as well as videotape, to create their model. These were digitized into a 256 color, 320 x 200 resolution, 3-D environment that makes players feel as if they are literally on the course.

Players may witness how a portion of this effect is achieved each time the screen updates. First, the terrain model is sculpted using a vector graphics routine that creates a 3-D topographic representation. Second, the area is colored, shadowed and highlighted to enhance the undulating feel of the terrain. Finally, digitized renditions of the actual vegetation, tee markers, ball washers, cart paths and background are overlaid for the full effect. The intricate detail evoked by this process allowed players to fully suspend disbelief with one exception... screen updates took a long time.

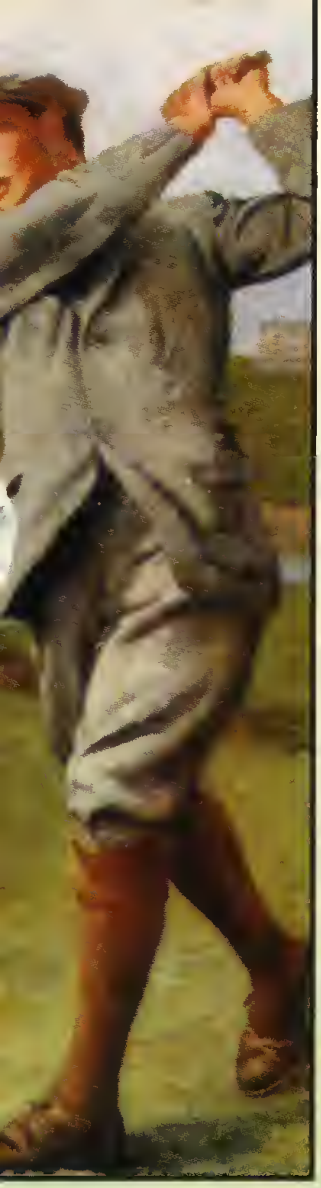
Despite definite inroads into Accolade's supporters, Access was also affected by the technological crunch. As soon as a sufficient user base of high end machines developed, they further refined **Links** by developing **Links 386 Pro**. Requiring SVGA graphics, and a minimum 386/16 with 2MB of RAM, the program really glistens on a 386/33 with 8MB of RAM or above.

Access should be highly commended for responding to player feedback in completing this upgrade. First, owners of all of the prior **Links** expansion course disks (Bountiful, Firestone, Bay Hill, Pinehurst, Dorado Beach, Barton Creek and Troon North) found that their course library could be fully converted to the new engine and it would look better than ever before. Also, **386 Pro** is the first and only program to offer a "Unique Computer Opponent." Players can play a round and save it to disk, pass it to a friend, and they will be able to play the round with the player character right alongside. Other innovations include nine different viewing windows, split screen graphics, improved statistics and interface, and a "saved shot" replay feature which allows players to show off their better efforts. Most important of all, however, is that the new program suffers none of the screen update delays that dragged down its predecessor.

Other factors which place **Links 386 Pro** in the lead are excellent product support (a new course is released every six weeks) and an impending arrangement with the Computer Sports Network, based out of Houston. CSN will host a weekly 4-round tournament where players can download course conditions, play the round off-line and upload their results.

Further, there will be semi-annual qualifying tournaments where players may be

The Links' Pinehurst course provides all the challenging holes of the original!



PGA ranked as either club pros or touring professionals, to allow them access to bigger tournaments on the circuit and better prizes. Amateurs may also be nationally ranked in 4-6 regions and receive PGA handicaps for use in subsequent play. For more information about the Computer Sports Network, contact (713) 952-1060. Finally, there is the fact that **Links 386 Pro** recently took top honors at the Software Publisher's Association Awards for Best Sports Game of 1992.

A View From the Gallery

As these behemoths battle it out, there are a number of interested onlookers in both the computer and videogame industries. Each seeks to be a contender in its own right but has yet to rival either of the aforementioned programs. On computer format, the major players seeking to dethrone the top two are **David Leadbetter's Greens**, from Microprose, **PGA Tour Golf**, from Electronic Arts, and **Wilson Pro Staff Golf**, from Konami.

David Leadbetter's Greens is best thought of as a tutorial for actual play. Developed in conjunction with the golf instructor who helped Nick Faldo, Nick Price and Ian Baker-Finch rise to championship status, the program places a greater emphasis on swing mechanics than any other offering. Players adjust stance, swing, ball and tee positions and each shot is analyzed through instant replay and commentary.

Similarly, **Wilson Pro Staff Golf** is notable for fast screen refresh rate, multiple play options like best ball and shoot out, and is the only program to address backspin directly.

David Ledbetter's Greens uses helpful and detailed graphics during the game.

EA's **PGA Tour Golf** offers the broadest spectrum of professional players as well as the best handling of tournament play. It is worthy of some accolades (no pun intended), but will get them in the video game, *vice* the computer arena. All in all, the other computer contenders each possess attributes which set them apart, but the aggregate is not enough to put them ahead of the top players, Access and Accolade.

Contention in the video game world is a little more crowded. It is important to observe that **Jack Nicklaus Power Challenge Golf** (Sega; the SNES version was **JN Golf**), the derivative of the computer offering, is not at the top of this pack. Honors among this crowd definitely go to EA's **PGA Tour Golf II** for the Sega Genesis, which is the most comprehensive, among either the new designs or computer conversions, for recreating the look and feel of championship golf on a video platform. **PGA Tour Golf** for SNES is also good, but not as good.

Sega's PGA Tour Golf (Genesis) lets console players tee off on a rainy day.

SNES owners may also enjoy Hal's **Hole in One Golf** (from Hal America), IREM's **Skins Game** or **True Golf Classics: Waialae Country Club** by T & E Soft of America. Each of these offers acceptable renditions of match and stroke play, but they are limited by course selection and expansion is not possible.

Sega owners may find a contender in **Chi Chi's Pro Challenge Golf,** currently under development at Virgin, but it hasn't teed off yet so it's too soon to know.

Game Boy players are even more constrained as their field of contention is limited to either Tradewest's **Jack Nicklaus Golf** or Ultra's **Ultra Golf**, of which the former is the best choice.

On the Green

Where does all of this leave golf grognards who seek silicon satisfaction with budget pricing? After all, for most people, it's not feasible to buy all the games discussed and appreciate their uniqueness.

Hole in One Golf for the SNES lets you know when you blew an approach!

First, remember that none of these products are double bogeys (like Greg Norman's **Shark Attack**, which has mercifully become extinct), and differentiating between the pars, birdies and eagles really is an individual concern based on hardware and personal taste.

If one plays strictly video games then go for EA's **PGA Tour Golf II** without hesitation. If you cannot live without being able to alter the course itself, then one of the Jack Nicklaus products for IBM is the obvious choice. Also, if the player does not have, or does not intend to buy a 386 or higher machine (a mistake if one wants to stay on top of this industry...386/33 is now the trade minimum), then **JN Signature Golf** does offer a quicker, and more satisfying play experience than **Links.**

However, for those with the hardware and finances to support it, **Links 386 Pro** offers the ultimate golf experience short of actually paying and playing the courses themselves. Golf sims and games are alive and well on both the computer and video game formats. With increases in CD technology, the future holds many surprises for duffers of all ages and skill levels.

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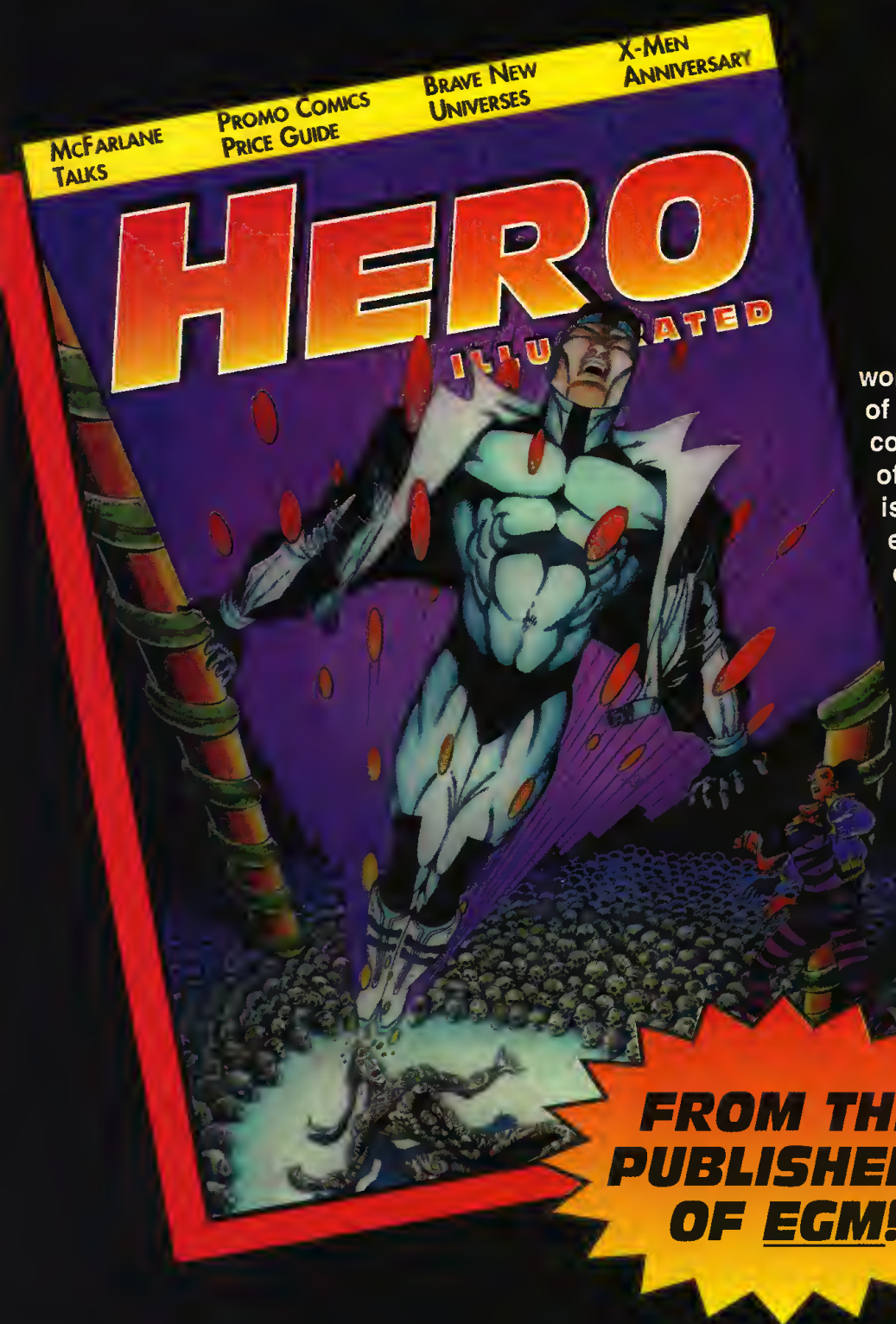

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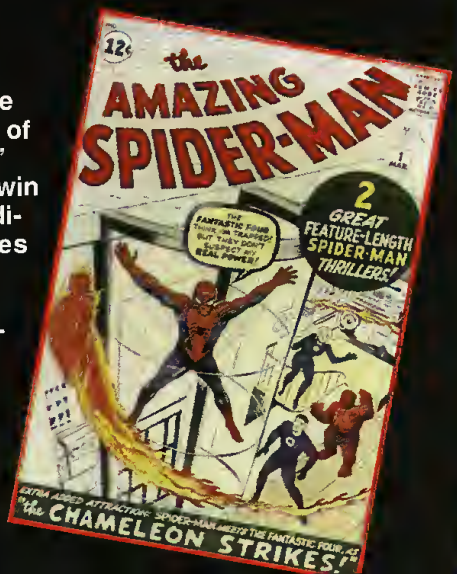

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StarFox vs. Sup

SNES Flight Simulators Go Head-to-Head!

by Bill Kunkel

After a long drought, flight simulation has finally arrived on the SNES n a big way Nintendo's vaunted **StarFox** is the showpiece for the Super FX chip developed by Argonaut Software the other **Super Strike Eagle** from MicroProse is the latest and most impressive ncarnation of a classic computer flight sim. Both games are superb one is set n the future wh le the other deals in state-of-the-art contemporary airborne combat.

Since both games are so good we decided to compare them in a number of categories and see which excells

So lower those visors strap yourself in grip the throttle and get ready for a *real* dogfight!

STARFOX

Publisher: Nintendo
Designed by: Shigeru Miyamato
Programmed by: Argonaut Software

Music: The opening theme is shamelessly nspired by John Williams original *Star Wars* score but once the game gets going, **StarFox** offers some nice melodic soft metal themes as a backdrop to the nterstellar mayhem

Sound Effects: Rather soft core for such an intense shoot em-up. Some of the explosions were not n synch with the actual detonations Other objects were obliterated without a peep and still others became space dust with a mere tinkling sound

Graphics: The visual presentation is definitely outstanding, creating the most impressive sense of flying *into* space ever seen on the SNES

The only drawback is the ack of variation space after all, is space This means that only the objects moving through space provide a visual change of pace, and the extremely stylized polygon presentation limits what **StarFox** can do in this category

Nonetheless missions on different planets occasionally offer genuine graphic thri ls as n the level where geometric blocks come flying at the player's sh p from several directions, and there are numerous large objects which help break up any visual monotony

Plus points are awarded for the three available viewpoints (Cockpit, Approach—directly behind the player's ship—and Standard—a short distance behind the player's sh p

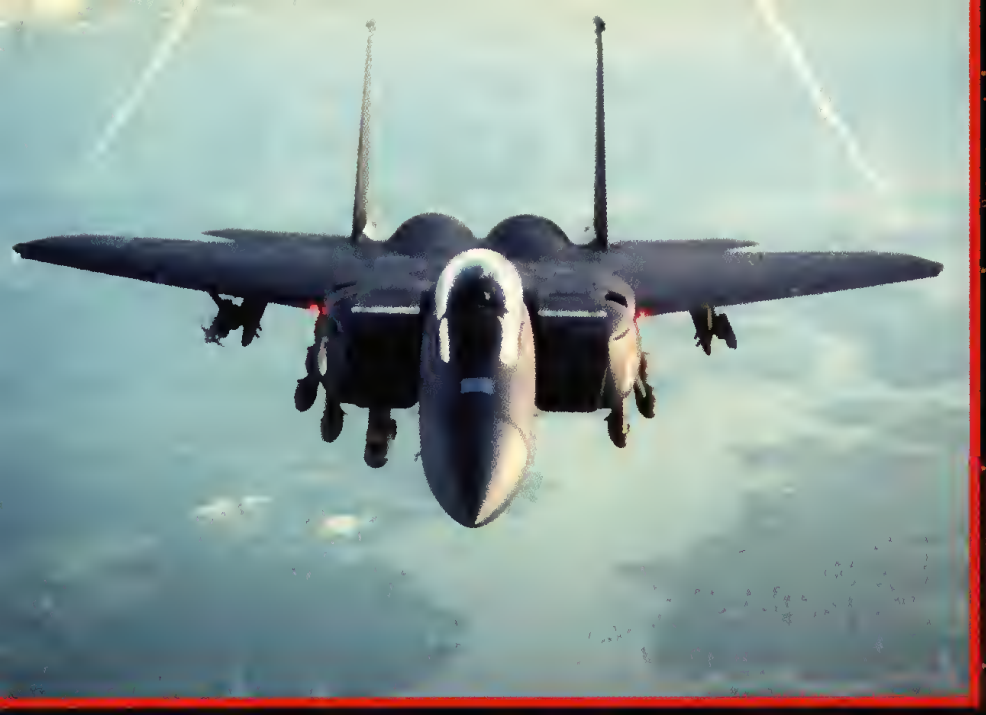
Playability: **StarFox** is, essentially a three-dimensional side-scroller complete with power-ups supply rings energy rings power shields, etc and a Boss (dubbed the Enemy Force Commander) waiting at the end of each mission These arcade elements wi appeal to the action-oriented players but may turn off more dedicated flight sim fanatics Plus points also are awarded for the use of wing pilots Falco Lombard Peppy Hare and Sl ppy Toad Though cartoonish-looking, they fit in nicely with the rest of the **StarFox** environment, and their distinctive personalities and ntercom-based nteractions are both a welcome humorous touch and a valuable player aid

StarFox combines incredible Mode 7 effects with great sounds and voice!

Realism: It s tough to evaluate realism in a game set in the far future starring anthropomorphic an mals Stil we have seen realistic-looking science fiction games and movies such as JVC/LucasArt's **Super Star Wars** and for that matter, all three Star Wars films The ships in the SW universe have a real lived-in quality, complete with scoring and scorch marks on the hul

StarFox can n no way be said to present a realistic universe its pastel polygons are quite beautiful but the space craft look more ike origam (the Japanese art of folding paper into tiny sculptures) than real machines

Finally the Nova Bomb is a brilliant piece of game design These limited weapons can be launched *and* detonated by the player so even when the Nova Bomb isn't on target for a direct hit, it can do a lot of damage ust by explod ng nearby



ng up on the differences between their various miss les as they acqu re them Only Mavericks and Sidewinders are ava lable for the starter mission As the players advances through the game they pick up AMRAAMs, advanced med um range and Sparrows long range which give the player greater offensive striking power They also aquire Rockeyes, which are air-to-ground missiles effective from high altitudes a lowing the player to stay out of range of the anti-aircraft guns wh le picking off those numerous and important ground targets

Realism Despite the game s streamlined play mechanics the sense of actually participating n an air war is very wel simulated The vivid graphics and combination of air and ground targets make this one of the most realistic combat flight sims on *any* platform

er Strike Eagle

SUPER STRIKE EAGLE

Publisher MicroProse
Designed by B C M igan Dave A. Wagner Steve J Puj a
Programmed by: Wagner and Puj a

Music: Scott Patterson and Jeffery Briggs have created an appropriately martia score guaranteed to keep pulses pounding throughout the action

Sound Effects. The digitized stereo sound effects are a real blast, with different sound values assigned to air crashes and ground strikes

Feel the thrill of piloting a $30 million dollar plane against your enemies.

Graphics: While the dogfight sequences are al wel and good it s the assaults on ground targets that really take **Super Strike Eagle** into overdrive The action takes place over five theaters of operation ncluding a practice level Libya, Cuba Korea and the Gulf The F-15 can even go after ships at sea The programmers made maximum use of the variety of topographical andscapes with texture-mapped terrains more realistic than anything ever seen on a home video game From the snowswept, rocky Korean targets to jungles deserts, and even major cities each new target offers spectacular visual scenes ust waiting to be blown into oblivion

Playability: This game was geared for playab ity MicroProse top guns have always stressed that they only want to s mulate the fun stuff so the endless fiddling with d als and levers that bogs down most computer flight sims is pleasantly missing here

The two-player option is great, especially for the ater missions with one player hand ng the weapons wh le the other flies the F-15.

The nice th ng about this game is that the learn ng curve is so well-structured there is almost no need to read the documentation Most players will begin pick-

Dive into the action with Super Strike Eagle's advanced graphics and moves.

Final Evaluation:

Preference between these two games is purely a matter of taste, since both are outstand ng products that show the range of possibi ities within the flight simulator genre Players who prefer a more rea stic, traditional game will probably prefer **Super Strike Eagle** as wi those gamers who prefer firing at ground targets to extensive dogfighting, Arcade gunslingers on the other hand, are l kely to find **StarFox** more their cup of tea

Whatever your preference these are both "A" products top notch programs reflecting state-of-the-art programm ng and playability on the Super NES Armchair pilots wi not be unhappy when flyng these beauties

VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Alien 3

PUBLISHER	LJN
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Action/Strategy
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	98%
SOUND	95%
PLAYABILITY	96%

OVERALL 96%

Those aliens try to get in Ripley's face again.

The Aliens are alive, well, and salivating. And once Ripley crash-lands on Fury (Fiorina) 161, a maximum security work prison which is all but deserted, the human *vs.* Alien action begins once again in earnest.

Ripley was returning to Earth in hypersleep aboard the *Sulaco* when it malfunctioned and jettisoned the emergency escape vehicle containing the crew's cryotubes. As the only human *Sulaco* survivor, Ripley is horrified to discover that a queen alien is spawning hundreds of flesh-eating offspring. The aliens have kidnapped the entire population of Fury 161 and are using the prisoners as growing hosts.

Ripley must stop the aliens, now and forever, before the Weyland-Yutani ship sent by the evil and mysterious "Corporation" arrives and gives the aliens a chance to escape and infest other worlds. The Corporation has plans on taking a specimen of this vicious species alive and bringing it back to Earth where it can, they hope, be transformed into the ultimate military weapon

Alien 3 gives the player three objectives. free prisoners trapped in alien cocoons; eliminate alien offspring infesting Fury 161, and destroy the nesting queen alien, who is hiding in the bowels of the prison These objectives are met in a series of eight mission scenarios ranging from Hunt or Be Hunted to Total Control.

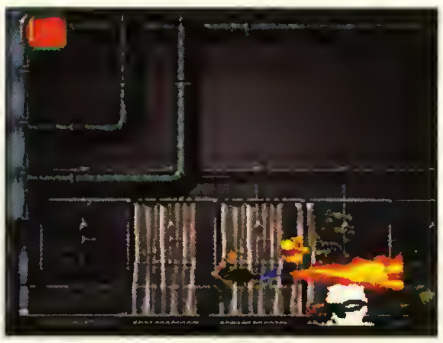
Ripley's arsenal includes a standard issue pulse rifle (machine gun), a grenade launcher and a flame thrower She also has a motion tracker, which senses movement, and a blowtorch, for repairing pipes and wiring, as well as sealing doors. The game screen displays both the current weapon and the remaining ammunition. Ripley gathers additional ammo and first aid kits as she explores and secures Fury 161.

An addition to the SNES version are the computer terminal posts. Terminal posts help Ripley monitor her progress through the rooms, corridors and ventilation ducts, and provide blueprints for the relevant areas of the Fury 161. These blueprints display the location of human prisoners as green dots. This advantage decreases the amount of time spent blindly hunting for prisoners and gives the game an additional strategic component which greatly enriches play

The game options permit the gamer to choose from among easy, normal, or hard levels of difficulty, as well as decide whether the sound should be in stereo or mono. The Continue command permits the player to start at a password protected level

The graphics and sound are phenomenal. The visual presentation transforms **Alien 3** from a standard horizontal/vertical scrolling action game to a work of art. The opening sequences have a powerful cinematic quality as they relate the background information The game graphics maintain and enhance the game beyond the standard two-dimensional quality.

All varieties of Aliens, from nascent face-huggers to the obscenely beautiful queen, are alive and on the prowl through the dismal environment of Fury 161. Although this deviates from the plot of the actual film, it enhances the game-playing experience immeasurably



Guide Ripley through the prison colony to seek out and destroy the alien horde.

The music begins with the same sparse metallic tones as the film and maintains the dark foreboding melody throughout the game The sound effects range from machine gun fire to Ripley dying and can be cycled through at the beginning of the game. The sound effects enhance the quality of the game by not only making it more realistic but also by adding to the film-like quality with the sound effects overriding the background music.

Alien 3's playability level is extremely high. The drive and obsession to destroy aliens will keep an avid action gamer playing. The desire to utilize all of the weapons in the arsenal combined with the ease of the interface aid in keeping a player enraptured. The use of terminals changes the SNES version into a strategy game that improves upon the already-excellent Genesis version.

—Laurie Yates

Street Fighter II CE

PUBLISHER	Capcom
SYSTEM	Genesis
THEME	Fighting
MEGABITS	16
PLAYERS	1 or 2
LEVELS	14
COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	89%
SOUND	89%
PLAYABILITY	92%

OVERALL 90%

Finally, the game for the Street Fighter II experts.

This is the age of the fighting game Word has quickly gotten around that if you make a hot fighting game you will become rich. It's that simple Why? Take one look at the legacy of the **Street Fighter** series and you can see the dollar signs pointing the way Capcom used an entirely unorthodox approach to making a video game they listened to gamers, and gave them what they wanted

After **Street Fighter II** began to slide in the polls they quickly turned around and released a new more powerful version that "balanced" the characters so that no one warrior was the most powerful While true compared to the original title, Guile and M Bison players will have the upper hand It just isn't so easy that's all This is the mighty game that is coming soon to Genesis owners everywhere

While the original version sold well and did well, the **Champion Edition** is far superior because of two simple facts. First, players can now control the formerly computer-controlled bosses with ease Second, gamers can also play same character versus same character matches (i.e , red Ken versus black Ken). Among a few other choice upgrades are: ability to choose from two suit colors increased speed of characters, enhanced graphics allowing for more detai in characters and backgrounds, new special attacks for certain characters and lastly increased individuality and personality, most notably for the characters Ryu and Ken.

At first, these two warriors had the same skills strength, stamina and speed. Now, however, the differences are clear though they exhibit the same special attacks, they respond differently Ryu has a better variable-timed fireball (faster or slower than Ken s) Ken s Rising Dragon Punch has a much wider arc allowing for a devastating Triple Dragon Punch combo Ryu's is merely stronger Ryu has a slow, long, and powerful hurricane kick that knocks his opponents to the ground in one blow Ken s hurricane kick is quick and short, but deadly if someone gets caught underneath it. This flurry of unblockable hits is known as "The Eggbeater " Noticeably Ryu is stronger and slower, but Ken is faster with a berserker streak.

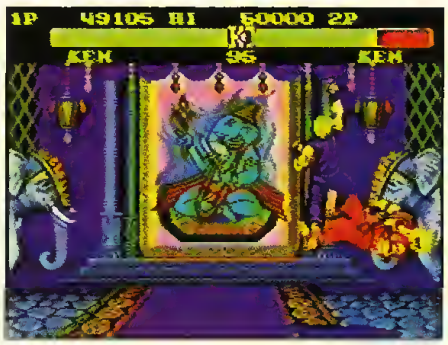
On the Genesis, every little detail is intact, right down to E.Honda s Knee Butt. Some moves have changed their appearance to save memory, but they act the same as their arcade counterparts. A few other attacks act differently like the Vega Fierce Rolling Claw It can be used for a crushing four-hit combo! Balrog also has his crushing Final Turn Punch that drains fully half of an opponent's energy The reason for these changes is that this game is based on the Japanese release of the arcade title, not the American For some reason, these powerful adjustments are only in the American **Street Fighter II Turbo Edition**, but that's another story.

Graphically, the **Street Fighter** series has always been superb. On the Genesis, it loses some of the clarity and detail thanks to the reduced palette of colors available. Considering the limitations, this is a great effort! The game is still cool enough to warrant a look. The character animation could use a little more work, however and this really detracts from the game's quality Though the game plays smoothly, the on-screen representation is a bit choppy Again it isn't bad for Capcom s first Genesis effort.

Control the radical bosses in this latest rendition of the great Street Fighter II!

On the hot topic of sound and music, the Genesis has never been star-quality, but merely a hopeful The rockin tunes of the Street Fighter legend are not accurately rendered on the Genesis. The lack of any sort of bass has hurt many of the Genesis titles and this is one major example The tingy sounds which are inherent in all Genesis titles do not sound good in **Street Fighter II CE**. The translation is very good but not quite enough to soothe The Savage Street Fighter Beast.

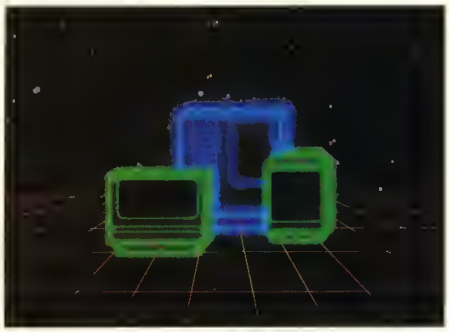
All things said and done, it's the game play that really decides the fate of a game in the gamer's mind. A game can look great, sound great, but if it plays like a crusty sock, who cares? If **Street Fighter II CE** on the Genesis is a sock, it's definitely a Christmas stocking. The game play alone is enough to keep players coming back for more Every single combo has been left intact, and Capcom even deviated the structure slightly to allow for some new ones. This version not only plays as well as the arcade, it surpasses it, thanks to the minor adjustments to the techniques.



Gamers can use new special attacks and play same-character matches!

On the downside playing with a three-button controller doesn't cut it. If players want the arcade feel and game play, they must go out and purchase the new six-button controllers The new Sega pad is a marvel to behold and use. It has the standard six-button layout (perfect for **Street Fighter II CE**) and is more responsive than the original Genesis controllers. It is the obvious choice for gamers who like pads rather than joysticks. Heck, get one anyway, it just plays and feels better than the old pads. Them s the breaks but it's worth it.

—Kenneth R. Williams



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Dungeon Master

PUBLISHER	JVC
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	RPG
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	82%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	72%

OVERALL 75%

Can you defeat the forces of evil in the Grey Lord's castle?

Details details.

The title might lead a potential buyer to think this is one of those numerous programs out there made to handle all the tedious details that used to be incurred by the leader/designer of a dungeon game· the rolls of the multi-sided dice the characters that must be created the chart books that must be consulted and the maps that must be constructed step by step and room by room and level by level

The primary screen keeps the player informed about his party's status.

To the extent that such dungeon masters enjoyed handling al those details, yes this game is for them

As with most video game dungeon fantasies of course, the dungeon-world has already been created, the lead-in story told (reasonably well for once), and a familiar-sounding goal established This is the finding and recovery of the Fire-staff which will aid in the reconstruction of a ravaged world

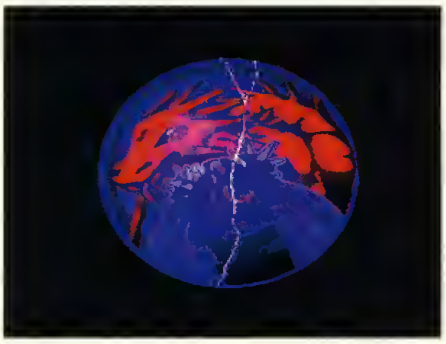
A number of player characters—Champions—have already been created, from whom four may be selected for the quest. Alternatively, new champions may be created by the player though not with full control over characteristics.

All 24 champions presumably died during the world-sundering catastrophe and now await either resurrection or reincarnation in the hal of champions near the entrance of the dungeon Resurrection here means the ready-made characters "remember" all their skills and abilities if resurrected they start fresh with a new player-supplied name and unhoned skills, but enhanced physical potentials.

There is no demo mode the player goes directly into the game from the title page Waiting to do so will bring up a scrolling exhortation from the Grey Lord to his apprentice (the player) to gather the group and save the world

The first taste of the game is upon entering the open doors to the dungeon and finding the way to the Hall of Champions where the selections must be made. This gives good practice in learning how to maneuver in the maze-like passages, which are presented in excellent, first-person detail though without the state-of-the-art perspective-scrolling effects seen in some of the newer high-end games. The view is through a window at the left of the screen, a movement control panel is on the right. Moves are made by selecting directions on this panel with the cursor or with the thumb pad and R-L buttons while holding the X button Later the second mode can become the default without holding X.

In the Hall the spirits of the champions are seen in mirrors like portraits on the walls, touching each provides the needed details of their equipment, status and capabilities. The mirrors are spread out over a considerable section of corridors, so just gathering the party together takes considerable time. The game save option does subsequently let all these preliminary steps be bypassed



You, Theron, must do what it takes to eliminate Chaos and his evil minions.

Once the party is selected and continually as the game is under way the player must check screen-pages ful of details about each member to make sure they're ready for al eventualities. They must be ready with their weapons look at things take and carry things (making sure that they don't carry too much—certain weight levels will slow them down and thus the party) There are spells to be cast and encounters to survive They also must sleep occasionally and be fed. Al such items have to be specifically attended to—there is an eye symbol for examining things and a mouth symbol for eating and drinking, an active hand for holding weapons, and a ready hand used to hold non-combat items or arrows, darts or stones for those with range weapons. There is a backpack, a quiver *and* a smal pouch In skirmishes damage can occur to specific portions of the body and there is of course specific protective gear for each

There is a considerable learning curve for mastering this game, even for players accustomed to identifying small items and symbols on the TV output of a video game Happily when the hand-shaped cursor is placed on them and the selection button (B) pushed they are usually also identified with text. But the manual should be kept at hand for checking what to do and identifying items on the various status and option screens.

There is no auto mapping. That is, the player must create a map—the manual helpfully recommends allowing 30 squares in each direction on grid paper per level

Dungeon Master is a game that seems made for the list makers and maze hunters of adventuring. Go to it!

— *Ross Chamberlain*

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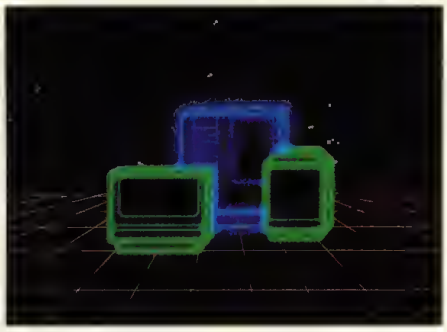


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Super High Impact

PUBLISHER	Acclaim
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Sports
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1 or 2
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Easy
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	92%
PLAYABILITY	92%

OVERALL 90%

This one turns the football field into an all-out battlefield.

This bare-knuckles football title is based on the popular coin-op machine Football purists will shun this action-oriented contest, but its pigskin pandemonium is a grabber for those who put intense, violent action ahead of the strategic nuances of the 100-yard fight.

Coaches choose from among 17 teams each representing a different city country or geographic area around the world Besides solitaire and head-to-head modes, two humans can cooperate against a computer-guided team

The **Super High Impact** option screen presents several ways to customize the game There s a choice of mono or stereo sound, and either grass or artificial turf The gamer also sets the length of a quarter at 2, 5, or 10 minutes and can compete at three skill levels.

The offense and defense have 16 play options on each down, though a few may not be intelligent choices in any particular situation. You wouldn't try to kick a field goal, or defend against one, if the ball is on the offense's own 10-yard line.

The game has a very strong arcade feel, and faithfully reproduces the original.

The vertically bisected playbook screen shows nine potential plays for each team, arranged in three by three blocks. A diagram shows how each play is supposed to work. The upper right corner block in each grid, labeled More Plays, accesses a second block of choices.

The highlight frame can be moved even after the player picks a play, which helps disguise strategy in head-to-head confrontations.

The direction controller moves a highlighting frame from play to play within the grid. Pressing button A enters the currently highlighted play

The playbook screen also summarizes important game information Shown are score field position, down yardage to go for a first down quarter, and time remaining in the current period of play

After both the offense and defense pick their moves, **Super High Impact** switches to an angled side perspective view of the gridiron The large and well-animated players literally shake the whole field when they hit, and the close-up view of the action showcases the exaggerated roughness and bone-shattering tackles.

On this field, the players are rewarded for those bone-crunching mega hits!

The audio is great, too. The grunts and groans mix with well-digitized speech to provide the right atmosphere for all the mayhem

Play-mechanics are anything but subtle The center automatically hikes to the quarterback who then may hand off pass or run Passing is much less difficult than in most football cartridges. Holding the B button while pressing the direction controller rifles the pass toward a receiver, who catches it if he s lucky

There are lots of frills, like the fighting interludes and the hit-o-meter, which encourage both sides to play with no-holds-barred ferocity Another feature that raises the hitting to the max is the turbo charge Pushing L or R at the right time gives the gridder under the player's active control a super-human burst of power to break a tackle or chop down defenders to nail the quarterback. Less rowdy extras include on-screen referee calls and several teams of cheerleaders.

This isn't the cartridge to use in a league, but it generates a lot of heat, especially in the player-*vs.*-player mode. What **Super High Impact** lacks in pigskin authenticity, it makes up for with bruising action and wild audiovisuals.

— Arnie Katz

WWF Royal Rumble

PUBLISHER	LJN
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Sports
MEGABITS	16
PLAYERS	1 or 2
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	94%
SOUND	88%
PLAYABILITY	9S%

OVERALL 95%

You'll get pinned to the mat in nothing flat.

The Royal Rumble is the centerpiece of a Pay-Per-View event staged every January by the entertainment-minded World Wrestling Federation. While battle royales are nothing new in pro wrestling,

The popular WWF stars are all here, waiting for you to enter the ring!

the Rumble puts an interesting spin on the procedure the event begins with only two men in the ring, their positions predrawn by lottery At timed intervals, new participants enter the fray again determined by the "luck of the draw"—or at least the designs of the event booker/choreographer Wrestlers are eliminated by being thrown out of the ring and the last man in the ring is deemed the winner However being last takes a huge amount of stamina, good skills and not a smal portion of overall wrestling luck.

Acclaim/LJN/Flying Edge have been working with the WWF for several years now, using Sculptured Software as developers in a quest to develop the best wrestling games on the market. They accomplished this feat with **WWF Super Wrestlemania** on the SNES and now, with **Royal Rumble**, they have topped even that spectacular accomplishment. The primary user gripe about the earlier game was that every wrestler had access to the same, fixed maneuvers (suplex, bodyslam headbutt, etc.) with no individual variation In **Royal Rumble**, however, each wrestler, be it Brett "Hitman" Hart, Mr. Perfect, Lex Luger, Razor Ramon, or any of the dozen superstar grapplers included on this program, has his own unique finishing move Mr Perfect has the Perfectplex (also called the Fisherman s Suplex), Ramon has the Razor's Edge a crucifixion-style suplex), and Yokozuna, the Samoan mock-sumo who used to wrestle as "Kokina Maximus" has his Banzai Drop. There are even special maneuvers reserved for villains, or heels as they're known in the grappling business

Royal Rumble offers users a wide variety of play options, including Match Type one-one-one, tag team, 6-man tag, and Royal Rumble Match Stipulations (one fall, brawl—a match with no referee, and tournament), and Difficulty (1-10) The Rumble mode is not entirely faithful to the actual RR in that there can be no more than six men in the ring at any one time (technology limitations). Thereafter with each elimination a new wrestler joins in until the 12th competitor has entered the ring.

Another addition from previous WWF games is the use of Strength Meters, which show players which opponent has the edge in strength after two men have locked up in a collar-and-elbow, or referee's hold. The downside of this feature is that wrestlers spend inordinate amounts of time in boring lock-ups; on the plus side, it is a helpful indicator as to a wrestler's power at any point in the match

The moves are activated in an almost identical manner to previous contests, with situational commands If the wrestlers are stalking one another on the mat, one set of moves are in force Once they lock up, another series of maneuvers takes over There s even a set of commands for action outside the ring—including the use of a conveniently positioned chair! The range of options are spectacular· virtually every situation seen in a WWF match can be duplicated with amazing realism

The wrestlers available are· Mr Perfect, Macho Man Randy Savage the Undertaker Crush, Tatanka Brett Hart, Ric Flair (who has since returned to the rival WCW organization), Shawn Michaels, Narcissist Lex Luger Yokozuna, Razor Ramon and Ted DiBiase The graphics and animation used to depict these wrestlers are truly incredible making it easy for gamers to enter into the fantasy world of pro wrestling.

Several annoying elements have been eliminated from the earlier SNES wrestling simulation including the lengthy and boring ring introductions by ring announcer Howard Finkel There are also some clever additions that, although minor, add greatly to the game's realism—such as refs being momentarily knocked out after colliding

Take the action outside of the ring as you beat your opponent senseless.

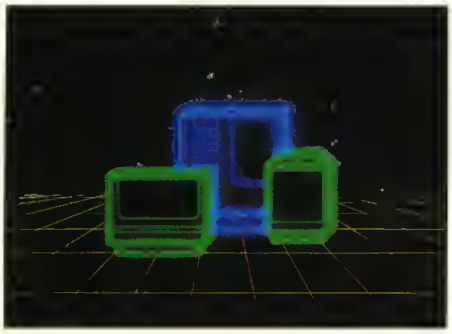
with a wrestler in motion called a "ref bump" in the business).

As contrasting versions of past Acclaim WWF games on the SNES and Genesis have shown the SNES WWF games are far superior to their Sega cousins. The graphics are better and the extra action buttons make move selection a breeze—it won't take non-wrestling fans very long to master the control system

In many ways, games such as **Royal Rumble** have an appeal similar to the **Street Fighter** contests—the players get to know each of the competitors, their strengths and weaknesses and with a ittle practice, these grapplers soon feel like electronic extensions of the gamers

Put simply, **Royal Rumble** is the finest arcade-style pro wrestling simulation ever released in any electronic format—surpassing even the excellent coin-op, **Superstars of Wrestling**, which dominated the arcades half a decade ago.

— Bill Kunkel



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Technoclash

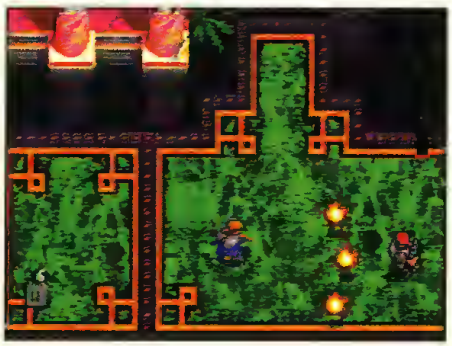
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
SYSTEM	Genesis
THEME	Action
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	7
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	87%
PLAYABILITY	90%

OVERALL 88%

Use the falcon's quick eyes to conquer the man-machines.

What do **Technoclash** and *America s Most Wanted* have in common? Both would lead you to believe that Las Vegas is a ightning rod that attracts all evi in the universe Some readers may have noticed that a disproportionate number of fugitives profiled on *America's Most Wanted* were last seen "in the Lake Mead area," which is on the outskirts of Vegas Likewise Ronaan the game s protagonist, begins his adventure in a Las Vegas casino. This similarity is noted with odd amusement, considering that the editorial headquarters of **Electronic Games** is located in Las Vegas.

How is it that Ronaan an apprentice wizard from the Inner Realm managed to find his way to a casino? Well it seems that technolords from Earth s future forged the evil Engine Man a generally unpleasant cyborg designed to be a nuisance anywhere he treads. They also constructed an interdimensional portal to transport Engine Man to the Inner Realm where by an uncanny coincidence al technology is considered evil and all machines are forbidden Due to the chaos and calamity left in his wake Engine Man s presence does not go unnoticed



Ronaan has a variety of weapons in his arsenal to use against formidable foes.

Enter Ronaan and his band of fellow wizards. They trace the portal back to the Teg Temple and follow Engine Man back to Earth either by accident, or by order of the High Counci depending on whether you believe the game introduction or its documentation Thus Ronaan finds himself in Las Vegas Ronaan s quest is to battle through seven levels, back to the Teg Temple, where his group must seal the portal and make the Inner Realm safe once again

Technoclash has a play mechanic and overhead perspective similar to that of **Gain Ground**. On first glance, one might be left with the opinion that **Technoclash** is mundane compared to some of the new polygon graphics games available on the Genesis. A second glance, however ought to render such a view incorrect. While this game may not demonstrate cutting edge technology in game play graphics or sound it does have a quality that some games lack. It is just pure simple fun to play

The graphics are crisp, and provide an enjoyable background for the various levels. The music and sound effects establish a mood and intensity appropriate to the activity occurring in the game rather than simply providing an audio backdrop for the onscreen action Each level expands in complexity and challenge from the previous level yet game play moves along at an unencumbered pace The dilemmas provided are not designed to be an exercise in mental gymnastics as much as to provide each level with some sense of purpose This combination yields interesting game play without numerous frustrations for the player to overcome

The use of spells is at the heart of game play Since technology is *persona non grata* in the Inner Realm, magic is the equalizer of choice. Ronaan and company fight primarily through the use of nine different combat spells. One of the combat spells has unlimited use, which assists greatly in effective spell management. Additionally four non-combat spells restore health teleport the party to safety (back to the camp), provide momentary invincibility and allow levitation (required in later levels

While casting combat spells is the epitome of simplicity the implementation of non-combat spells is an unnecessary complexity Combat spells are selected by depressing the C button and using the directional key to navigate a 3 by 3 spell matrix. Conversely non-combat spells are cast through the simultaneous use of two game controller buttons. Of course this problem mostly disappears if you have a six-button controller That's right, EA didn't waste any time taking advantage of this fabulous new gadget. However a 2 by 2 non-combat spell matrix could have provided an equally effective solution

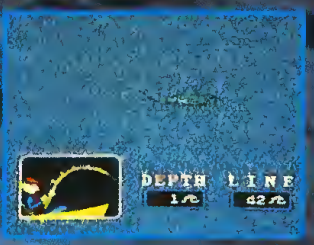
The fighting is fast and furious and crosses many different landscapes.

The password feature included in **Technoclash** also greatly improves the playability of the game While the password resets the player to the start of a level spel tallies are remembered and all continues are restored Make sure to note it at the end of each level located on the pause screen

Even when EA delivers a game that seems to be just another one in the genre, they seem to do it with a particular flair **Technoclash** is a fun game that delivers solid entertainment and an intriguing story line to your Genesis

—David Pokorny

Reel In The Great Outdoors Without Leaving Your Living Room.



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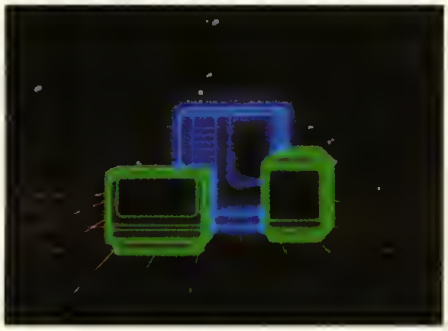

VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Goof Troop

PUBLISHER	Capcom
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Action/Adventure
MEGABITS	4
PLAYERS	1 or 2
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Easy
GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	79%
PLAYABILITY	82%

OVERALL 81%

More interactive Disney cartoons for kids of all ages.

For the past few years Disney has been making their mark on a new generation with the "Disney Afternoon" cartoons. Cartoons like *Duck Tales, Rescue Rangers,* and *Darkwing Duck* have soared in popularity The newest cartoon to grace the airwaves is **Goof Troop**.

Now Capcom has taken this cartoon starring Goofy Max, along with a whole gang of new characters, and transformed it into a game for the SNES.

It seems that the dreaded pirate Keelhaul Pete has kidnapped Goofy and Max's friends Pete and PJ. Goofy and Max try but they are unable to catch up with the pirate s ship. They are able, however to track the ship to an island, where the adventure begins. Goofy and Max must infiltrate the pirate's stronghold and rescue their friends.

Goof Troop looks like a Zeldaesque adventure role-playing game The characters are controlled in a 3/4 view, top-down perspective. They can interact with some of the island s natives, while gathering a variety of items to use in their rescue mission

Each level is laid out like a maze Obstacles such as locked doors, gaps in the floors, and pirates everywhere will try to keep Goofy from getting through

Players should collect diamonds for extra lives and continues, bananas and cherries for extra life candles to see in the dark, shovels to dig for buried treasure and a rope gun to grab objects that are out of reach and also to cross some hindering gaps.

The bosses in Goof Troop are a little hot under the collar. Try to cool them off.

There are also several types of keys to open locked doors, and many different items to pick up and throw at the pirates and animals that try and attack you

Goofy and Max can carry up to two items at a time (haven't these guys ever heard of pockets?) and must choose carefully which objects they are going to take with them Keys should never be left behind, and it is always good to have a rope gun on hand since one of its other uses is to knock enemies backward allowing you to run past them

Players can play alone as either Goofy or Max, or can team up and work together This has several benefits, including the ability to carry twice as many items, meaning less backtracking.

The graphics in this game are good, and all of the characters are easily identifiable with their TV counterparts. The animation is okay, but the characters and the angle of play prohibit anything too fancy Where the graphics really excel are in the backgrounds. They are clear and well painted and have a nice variety from level to level

The sounds are also very good, portraying the cartoon feel of the game and remaining unobtrusive even through long periods of play

From a game play standpoint Capcom of course keeps it reputation of creating games that are easy to pick up and just play All of the actions of the characters are simple and some of the touches — like the ability to catch an object thrown by another player or enemy — are a lot of fun to perform

Still, this game has its problems. It seems like it doesn't quite know what it wants to be. There isn't enough action to qualify it as an action game, the adventure aspect is weak, and at times some of the screens are nothing more than puzzles one would find in a game like **Lolo**, from the 8-Bit Nintendo. It is obvious that the game is intended for a younger audience and that Capcom is keeping things simple for that reason What they do not understand is that the majority of children out there are better at games than adults are, and if a game is too simple it wi be beaten and discarded in short order

Goof Troop is a good game and a fun play, but it is too easy for the long haul It gets high marks for its content, but loses points on re-playability Hopefully Capcom will consider a sequel to this game and round it out with more items, objects and challenges. This is a good game that could have been great.

— Marc Camron

Summer Challenge

PUBLISHER	Accolade
SYSTEM	Genesis
THEME	Sports
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1 to 10
LEVELS	8 Events
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	76%
PLAYABILITY	62%

OVERALL 64%

The thrill of the Summer games comes home.

Ever since **Track and Field** hit the arcade screens some years back, there has been the desire to create a game that would bring all of the thrill and adventure of the Olympics to the game

Follow the Kayak course and paddle hard to make the best time possible.

screen Once again there is a game out there trying to compete for the gold

The game is **Summer Challenge** from Accolade, and it takes some of the most popular Olympic events and packs them into a multi-player contest for all ages.

Archery Equestrian, Kayaking, 400 Meter Hurdles, Pole Vaulting, High Jump, Javelin and Cycling are all included here for armchair athletes to take their best shot at glory

Though the game does not present itself as the Olympics **Summer Challenge** is certainly a close cousin The events are scored in the same way, and the same rules apply

The graphics in this cart are very nice. The first-person perspective is a unique change of pace from the other contests currently available.

The sounds are also impressive and include some voice for when things are done well or are really fouled up.

Where this game is lacking is game play As pretty as the first-person perspective is, it becomes awkward It will

Timing is more important than speed in order to overcome the pole-vault.

even take veterans a while to get used to the view It makes jumping harder in the jumping events and in the javelin throw it makes foot-faulting a regular occurrence There just isn't enough room for error with the interface to make this view really viable.

That isn't to say that the game is unplayable Once one gets used to the way things look, the game improves and gets easier Accolade has even made the controls much more manageable than other games of the sort. Still the amount of time necessary to get the hang of things is annoying, and in this reviewer's opinion unacceptable

The other sore spot is the choice and variety of events. It seems that a spattering from all sorts of events was picked rather than a logical extension of any one field This would be fine if there were more events to choose from, but with only eight events the game seems somewhat sparse More track and field events would have been nice, as well as a few more from the esoteric sports. Shooting would have been a great choice to work with their interface.

Summer Challenge is not a game without merit, but it could have and has) been done better Sorry Accolade no gold medal here.

— Marc Camron

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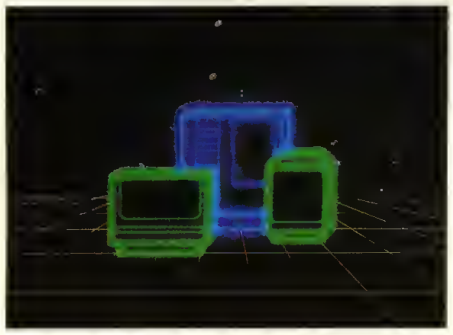

VIDEO GAME GALLERY

NFL Football

PUBLISHER	Konami
SYSTEM	SNES
THEME	Sports
MEGABITS	N/A
PLAYERS	1 or 2
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	87%
PLAYABILITY	68%

OVERALL 71%

The player's viewpoint takes a turn for the worse.

In the creative world everyone has failures. George Lucas had *Willow*, Spielberg had his disastrous television show "Amazing Stories," and even Wil Shakespeare periodically pulled a rock while writing all those classic plays. So it should come as no surprise that even the top sports simulation software development house in the world (the people who reinvented electronic football Park Place would eventually screw up a footbal game.

NFL Football could just as easily have been called "Mode 7 Football" since it rotates so much you d think the entire field were sitting on a lazy susan being spun this way, then that, by some mad operator intent on making viewers seasick. Obviously rotation is a wonderful thing and when used judiciously it can be a real enhancement to the presentation of sports games. **NFL Football** however should come packed with Dramamine.

The game process begins with gamers selecting a one or two-player mode, opting for an exhibition game playoff contest, or the retrieval of a saved game and wading through numerous other traditional game options. Playbook presentation is offered in Standard all teams have the same plays or Team format (where specific teams have special plays based on strengths and coaching style). Among other things players can select weather conditions. sunny rainy snowy night game or Auto, in which conditions are randomly determined based on the location of the home team (obviously it isn't going to snow if the game is being played in Miami)

All 28 NFL teams are present, rated from "A" to "F" in a variety of key statistical categories.

The game begins with a coin toss and kickoff and that's where our problems begin As the team kicking off approaches the ball the screen begins to rotate. It continues rotating once the ball lands and begins bouncing, completing a 180 degree spin by the time the receiver gets his mitts on the pigskin By then of course most players will be helplessly scanning the field desperately looking for the man with possession

The playbook interface is simple and sufficiently different from that used in the Madden games also developed by Park Place). Gamers use the four main command buttons to open the book, select a type of play (passing, running, special teams choose a formation and finally call a play The game also allows audibles—plays changed by the quarterback at the line of scrimmage—and even a "no-huddle" offense, popularized by several of the best NFL teams in recent seasons The no-huddle strategy is deployed by opening the playbook to the desired page, immediately calling the play then slamming the playbook closed and moving immediately to the ine of scrimmage If the maneuver is performed quickly and deftly the defensive team won't have time to decide on a defensive strategy and will be forced to improvise once the ball is snapped

Once the game toggles back onto the gridiron the offensive coach controls the QB, while a default player is selected for player control on defense. Using a control button the defensive coach can opt to command any alternative player but unlike the **Madden** games, that player cannot go into motion behind the line until the ball is snapped

After the snap, running plays are executed automatically in that the QB hands off to the back who is then assigned to player control On passing plays up to four eligible receivers are coded according to the A,B,X, and Y buttons on the SNES controller with one of these players designated as the primary receiver and displayed n red

Once a player has the ball he can perform the usual variety of moves to successfully maneuver through the defense by throwing a stiff-arm using a burst of speed or diving for a final yard

There s no problem with any of this, of course, it's fairly standard stuff Oh but that rotation! Much of the time, the player under the gamer's control isn't even on screen and when he is, it often takes precious seconds to locate him

Features such as scaling and rotation have been boons to gaming, but they can be overused. Anyone who doubts this has only to play **NFL Football** but we recommend they bring an airsick bag just in case al those effects get to them

If football looked like this on TV no one would watch it.

—Bill Kunkel

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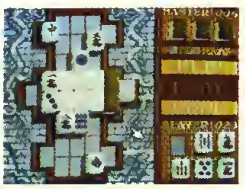

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Space Hulk

PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
DESIGNER	Wilson, Shrapnell & Jones
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Simulation
MEMORY	8.5 MEG
PLAYERS	1
COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	89%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	86%

OVERALL 89%

No one said the job of an Imperial Captain was easy.

"Warriors of the Empire Our scanners have failed us. The evil approaches from these zones—we sense their dark presence Deploy your squad here. Fear not our enemy, they are an abomination Honor your chapter Bless your weapons and go."

How's that for an inspirational briefing? Delivered in an ominous, echoing tone by the Imperial Commander of the Elite Terminator Marine Unit, it's the last thing players hear before teleporting aboard a giant monolith of twisted metal, rock, and ice blended together by an eternity of warp travel Lurking in the shadows are the Genestealers—intelligent, ruthless ki ling machines with claws that can rip through steel and tough chitinous hides capable of deflecting the hardest projectiles. Welcome to the Space Marines, Brother Welcome to **Space Hulk**.

Based on the popular board game by Games Workshop, EA's **Space Hulk** isn't just another role-playing adventure Heaven knows, there are enough monster-filled dungeons and mperiled kingdoms to last well into the next century so it takes something pretty special to catch the jaded adventurer's eye **Space Hulk** does just that by creating an atmosphere of urgency and apprehension that will leave more than a few gamers in need of a change of armor No other *Alien*-inspired game, including official *Alien* licenses recreates the claustrophobic terror of the award-winning films as effectively as **Space Hulk**.

Right off the bat Electronic Arts did away with the board game's obvious limitations. Instead of the player taking his turn moving his Marines to this square or that, and then watching as the aliens take their turn wreaking havoc on his hapless pawns **Space Hulk**'s Genestealers are constantly on the move and the player must stay alert and ready for sudden ambushes and brazen head-on attacks.

As an Imperial Captain the player commands anywhere from a single Terminator to two five-man squads from the safety of his control room aboard an orbiting Space Marine Warship. Through their helmet-mounted cameras, the player gets a Terminator's-eye view of the action in gloriously blood-splattered detail On his control panel are five video displays—a central primary screen and four smaller peripheral ones—and the ever popular motion detecting scanner

Although the Terminators may be controlled directly from the monitors the success of each mission really depends on strategy and the issuing of orders from the Planning Screen The Planning Screen features an overhead map of the Hulk with command icons used for sending the squad members about their business. Sometimes it's a search and destroy mission, other times it's the recovery of some piece of equipment. Done in Freeze Time planning gives the player a moment to breathe and to think through his predicament. A special Overwatch mode ensures that Terminators not presently under direct control have a semblance of sentience and know enough to open fire when attacked

The game is divided into three sections—Training Tutorials (basic & advanced), Space Hulk (individual missions), and the complete Deathwing Campaign Certain missions require specialized equipment, like Power Gloves, Heavy Flamers or Assault Cannons, and all are available from the Tech Priest. Each of the Hulks has its own visual character as well from starkly metallic to dusty and ancient. Together with atmospheric sound effects like the crackling of exposed circuitry, the rhythmic rotation of ventilator fans, and the horrible screams of comrades being torn limb from limb, they give the game an undeniable and immediate presence

Despite its somewhat fascist and misplaced religious zeal (*nobody* expects the Spanish Inquisition!), **Space Hulk** is a real nail-biter of a bug hunt, and it's not just the bugs that are being hunted

—Scott Wolf

Strike Commander

PUBLISHER	Origin Systems
DESIGNER	Chris Roberts
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Flight Simulation
MEMORY	41 MEG
PLAYERS	1
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	95%
SOUND	95%
PLAYABILITY	85%

OVERALL 95%

In this war, it takes more than good flying skills to survive.

Surprisingly **Strike Commander** does not repeat the approach of the arcade-heavy **X-Wing** and **Wing Commander** series. Instead fans will find a realistic F-16 simulation wrapped in cinematics and a familiar game system just as challenging, breathtaking and enjoyable as Origin s other flight simulators.

Strike Commander is by no means the first F-16 simulation but it is destined to become the most popular one because of its cinematic scenes, mission variety and overall game system Players take the role of the newest recruit of the Wildcats, a team of airborne mercenaries-for-hire based in Istanbul in 2011. Society has degenerated to the point that private parties hire out groups like the Wildcats to destroy their enemies.

Spectacular animated scenes add a movie-type feel to the entire simulation.

Missions depart from the home base or outlying strike bases that are closer to targets and navigation points. Like the **Wing Commander** games the strike bases and home base contain a few linked screens on which to save and load games, talk to other Wildcats pilots, receive mission briefings and, new in **Strike Commander**, check finances and order weapons.

Players can equip a number of air and ground weapons on the wings of the game's F-16 in each mission In early missions, the plane may already be loaded. In later missions, the weapon configuration is at the player's disposal In all cases, used weapons cost money and successful missions earn fees.

Those who win every mission will have no problem covering the cost of new weaponry later on in the game. Failed pilots still have a chance for success, but must make up the loss in revenue with more dangerous (i.e , profitable) missions. Roberts set up the system this way so that fans never feel the necessity to win every mission success has many paths. Missions come from a variety of sources, but many are assigned by patrons of Selim's, a popular bar close to the Wildcats home base.

Joystick jockeys who expect to jump right into the missions and succeed are in for a rude awakening. **Strike Commander** is no arcade game. Players should learn to successfully handle the on-board controls and read the HUD and multi-function displays before they create a pilot and attempt the missions.

An object viewer of rotating 3-D versions of ground-based and airborne targets helps players increase recognition Fans can put together training missions with any desired enemy planes and ground targets. The training mission map contains a number of terrain features like canyons, islands and bays that cover the gamut of actual mission obstacles.

Strike Commander has a steep learning curve, but training missions are as enjoyable as those in the main plot. A few hours in training is mandatory but acceptable once players realize the complexity and power of the F-16.

Origin smothered **Strike Commander** with enough graphic detail that even those with the minimum system requirements will gape in awe at the game s artistry Ground detail is better than any other simulator available, except perhaps **Comanche: Overkill**. Sun glare, blackout, redout, camera views and even cockpit details reflect the effort to make this product look better than anyone else's. Cinematic scenes abound to make the world of 2011 an unsettling, yet believable place. Little touches like kill marks on the side of the plane and limited visibility in cloud cover emphasize the simulator's realism.

The game does not need the rumored 52 megs or more for a minimum setup; 27 megs will suffice for a fairly impressive game. The Speech Pack adds another level of excitement, but also increases the size of the game by eight megs. Players won't miss the speech that much, since it only kicks in during wingman communications and certain story scenes, but it is incredibly crisp and understandable The Vulcan gunfire sounds are hokey but most of the sound effects are up to Origin standards. The music is much more impressive than the speech or sound effects because it reflects the plot and introduces the main theme in a number of subtle ways.

Strike Commander is one of those dangerous games that Roberts has a knack for creating, which threaten to eat up all of one s time. Here he surpasses that personal standard with malleable training missions varied terrain and multiple paths that believably adjust the plot. Those who upgrade their systems to handle the sounds and graphics will be able to show off the best in flight simulators to their envious friends.

— Russ Ceccola

SOFTWARE GALLERY

Harrier Jump Jet

PUBLISHER	MicroProse
DESIGNER	Brunton, Ramsey-Jones, Tim
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Flight Simulation
MEMORY	6-8 MEG
PLAYERS	1
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	89%
PLAYABILITY	85%

OVERALL 89%

The Harrier takes flight simulation into new directions.

To the casual observer all flight simulators look pretty much alike Without using external views of the player's aircraft it s easy (if not satisfying) to imagine flying any plane in any game

As with any plane, poor judgement can lead to a flaming end of your career!

Not so with MicroProse s **Jump Jet**. Even the disk s readme file warns "It is important to remember that the Harrier flies like no other jet." Yes, the Harrier, that anomaly of aviation that can take off and land vertically hover like a demented bee and even fly backwards, is totally unique

Except for a token appearance in EA s **Birds of Prey** the VSTOL (Vertical/Short Take Off and Landing) Harrier has been unavailable to PC pilots until now Domark's recent **AV-8B Harrier Assault** is an excellent strategic campaign and flight simulation featuring the USMC s McDonnell Douglas Harrier II However MicroProse s **Jump Jet** (subtitled The Harrier Strike Fighter In Explosive Front Line Action offers a little more variety, with choices between the Marine Corps AV-8B or the RAF's GR 7 in three hypothetical scenarios: the Falklands in October of 1997 Hong Kong in April 1996 and Nordkapp, the North Cape, in July 1998.

Structurally **Jump Jet** follows the standard MicroProse game formula—after a flashy opening intro removable to save hard disk space) and manual copy protection pilots log-in and hit the ready room where options are selected (difficulty theatre of operations, briefing, instant flight and dogfight) Typically, two objectives are assigned and waypoints are pre-programmed The player may accept the default ordnance load or hand pick one more to his iking. Missions are launched from land-based airstrips or from seagoing amphibious assault sh ps at any time of the day or night. Static graphic screens at every step are excellent and effectively convey the feel of each situation

Once in the cockpit the Harrier's true nature reveals itself n addition to the standard instrumentation there are a couple of displays labeled Nozzle Angle and JPT (Jet Pipe Temperature). The Harrier achieves VSTOL by directing the 21,500 pounds of thrust from its Rolls-Royce Pegasus turbofan engine to four rotating nozzles on the plane s fuselage two on each side The nozzles can be vectored from 0 degrees (straight back) to 98 degrees (slightly forward) and the JPT must be monitored to prevent them from being damaged

The cockpit also features two Multi-Function Displays and a HUD with three separate modes for navigation VSTOL operation and combat. Six different cockpit views are nicely detailed and even include the Miniature Detonating Cord which explodes the canopy prior to ejection.

Exterior views are nice too—the Harrier's unusual landing gear (bicycle-type main gear with two wing-mounted outrigger units looks beefy and retracts properly. The use of Gouraud shading creates very realistic landscapes and the sky shading in the North Cape is particularly evocative

Unfortunately, though, there is no great perception of speed The display is smooth enough and the plane handles well (an unarmed Harrier has a higher roll rate than the F-16) but even at an indicated airspeed of over 500 knots the **Jump Jet** seems to be merely loitering. On the other hand the Harrier is capable of some amazing maneuvers. There s a devious little move called VIFFing (Vectoring In Forward Flight)—should an enemy get on your tail rotate the nozzles forward and the sudden massive loss of airspeed will cause the attacker to overshoot, neatly and instantly turning the tables A nice touch would have been a pop-up window showing the astonished enemy pilot's face **Jump Jet** also supports the Thrustmaster control systems (FCS, WCS and RCS), which immensely increase the enjoyment of the game.

Can't decide between **Strike Eagle III** and **Maximum Overkill**? Test drive the **Jump Jet**. This is *not* your father's Piper Cub or Cessna.

— Scott Wolf

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Inca

PUBLISHER	Coktel Vision/Sierra
DESIGNER	Coktel Vision
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Adventure
MEMORY	20 MEG
PLAYERS	1
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	95%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	85%

OVERALL 85%

The immense power of the ancients is yours to control.

American gamers have occasionally looked to other countries for electronic entertainment ever since they saw the influx of games from Japan in video arcades back in the late 70's. In recent years European developers (Psygnosis, Delphine Software and Bullfrog come to mind) have obtained great success in the States with their best computer games. Sierra recently forged an alliance with Coktel Vision a French company whose products are altogether eclectic, but nonetheless quite entertaining and challenging.

Inca is the first Coktel Vision adventure to make it to the U.S. A hybrid in a true sense of the word, it has a little bit for everybody and a whole lot for players with open minds.

After the lengthy (20 minutes and hard drive-consuming (20 Megs installation, **Inca** starts with a bang. An impressive introduction including speech in some ancient tongue sets up the game. Players take the role of El Dorado, the mythical "Golden One" of the ncan Empire destined to return the Empire to its former glory The only way to do this is to find the three jewels of Time, Matter and Energy Many varied tests of brain power and arcade skills lie between the introduction and success. Players truly never know what to expect next in **Inca.**

European press and Coktel Vision spokesmen have described **Inca** as an interactive film That's far from the truth, yet it's easy to accept after an hour or so of game play **Inca** is a combination of a combat/flight simulator with an adventure game It jumps back and forth between these two modes of play but the transitions make sense within the context of the plot. Players must navigate mazes and solve puzzles in three-dimensional first-person adventure game segments. They also need to navigate surface canyons, blow up asteroids and fight enemy ships in the simulation game segments. In both cases, the interfaces are easy to use so players can instead concentrate on survival until the next milestone. Fortunately, these milestone points have color-coded save codes so players can begin where they left off

Inca is the perfect game for two players to try together The one with quicker reflexes can play the arcade segments and both can think about the puzzles **Inca** gives gamers five lives, with nine hit points per life to take damage from enemy ships, hand-to-hand combatants and other dangerous situations. There are three weapon types on the player's ship, the Tumi fighter but each may only be effectively) used in certain parts of the game. The save codes allow players to experiment and have fun without loss to a simple mistake of al previous play experience in a saved game.

Embark on a journey through the ages with mysterious Incan technology

European companies ike to show off the talents of their artists and musicians in their products. **Inca** makes no exception The graphics are excellent and involve such varied techniques as 3-D polygon modeling, video capture smooth animation dazzling full-screen backgrounds and an exceptional level of detail. **Inca** also features recorded speech segments and lots of weird and varied sound effects. Its soundtrack is so impressive that Coktel Vision released it on CD in Europe where it gets regular radio airplay Sierra has imported the CD for interested gamers to buy **Inca** excels in the bells and whistles category, enough to justify those 20 Megs on the hard drive

Inca divides players because many try too hard to classify the game rather than just accept it as entertainment and go from there The mazes might confuse some players because of the ground perspective a hint book is available for the desperate Also, Huayna Capac offers hints within the game

The only people who should totally avoid **Inca** are those who have no tolerance for arcade game segments. Everyone else will enjoy **Inca** for what it is–an unusual combination of game styles and perspectives wrapped around an interesting plot and characters.

— *Russ Ceccola*

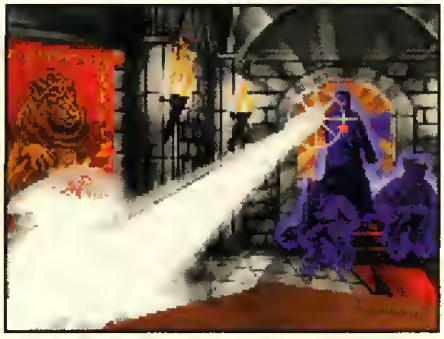
Challenge of the Five Realms

PUBLISHER	Microprose/Microplay
DESIGNER	Lennon, Hall & Miller
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	RPG
MEMORY	23.5 MEG
PLAYERS	1
COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	92%

OVERALL 89%

Can you discover the hideous secret shrouded by your past?

His father is dead killed by a great reptilian monster named Grimnoth right before the young prince s eyes. Thus begins the quest across the five realms of Nhagardia. The newly orphaned prince must unite the Kingdoms of the Surface, the Underground, the Sea, the Forests and the Air, and obtain the five crowns of the great kings to restore life to the sixth realm of Ruddiquid and battle the evil Grimnoth



A captivating story line draws players to an intense and puzzling quest.

Challenge is a computer role-playing game based on progression from 0 to 255 points in 40 attributes and skills, including hit points, magic points fatigue, and encumbrance, instead of the levels seen in other games. Skill based advancement gives the game player more flexibility and requires greater involvement in character development than seen in level-based games.

Ten other characters can adventure with the prince The PAL system, developed by the Greensburg, Pa., branch of Microprose, has characters volunteering for the tasks for which they are most suited, eliminating the need to check character statistics before selecting who will perform specific actions while exploring. An innovation allows the prince to recruit squads of up to five men for one character slot. Each squad of men is represented by a single character icon Character icons are displayed at the bottom of the local exploration screens.

The character generation routine has a paint program to personalize the prince s game icon There are blanks for chins, nose, eyes, mouth, and hair similar to make-a-face construction kits.

Most game actions are controlled by simultaneously active keyboard or mouse-based commands The duplication of command modes allows for one hand on the keyboard and the other on the mouse to quickly and effectively control the game.

Within the 39 different locations in the game, characters enter buildings, search for artifacts, communicate with hundreds of unique inhabitants with evolving scripts, solve puzzles, and battle the evil forces that strive to thwart the hero.

Many local sub-plots advance the character in power, and provide the keys to the successful recruitment of aid to the kings of the five lands. Most of the puzzles involve the character in the local intrigue of each realm, requiring him to resolve one or more local problems before the local monarch will personally volunteer to aid the prince The main character must find an important series of artifacts and use them in the correct manner and location, in order to solve the puzzles.

The non-linear plot was developed by Marc Miller a past member of the Game Development Workshop, who has been responsible for many excellent paper-and-pencil and computer role-playing games. Marc is really in his element with **Challenge**. The depth of play interesting settings, logically developed puzzles, rich textured plot, and careful characterizations show off his award-winning style.

Combat and exploration are presented n an overhead map-like perspective, with the animated characters moving over the map. Perspective is augmented by an auto-map that allows characters to move from place to place easily Leaving a town replaces the smaller map with an overhead view of the entire realm A click on the map icons of other towns or locations immediately transports the prince there if he has the means to get there, such as a ticket for a sea passage, which is needed for travel on or over the ocean. Travel over the sea is very confusing and non-intuitive, and unfortunately, the uncharacteristically short, though well-written, 45-page player's manual provided little help in sorting out this dilemma.

Players can test their skills as they travel through the immense realms.

Real-time tactical combat is carried out on the local area map with the appropriate characters, who usually attack. While the prince can attack characters, he should usually try to talk to everyone first, taking copious notes of the conversations.

Standard weapons and spells are used to resolve conflicts. The prince s actions are controlled by the game player while the PAL system adequately controls all other characters

A 6-megabyte full-screen cinematic introduction of the prince witnessing Grimnoth's murder of his father, the king, uses state-of-the-art animation, musical score and speech. Other cut screens, while short, are of comparable detail The graphics are colorful and well thought out, if not as stunning as those seen in some other first-person perspective games, such as **Eye of the Beholder**. Studio-quality digital music and sound effects but not speech are used throughout to good effect.

For real-time strategic combat-based fantasy role-playing with overhead perspective, an immense landscape to explore, an excellent, involving story, treasure hunt-style puzzles, and all the frills gamers need look no further than **Challenge of the Five Realms**. This one will have the adventurous types occupied for quite some time.

— Al Giovetti

SOFTWARE GALLERY

Liberty or Death

PUBLISHER	Koei
DESIGNER	Koei
PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Simulation
MEMORY	1 MEG
PLAYERS	1-2
COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	88%
PLAYABILITY	95%

OVERALL 87%

Can you affect the outcome of America's fight for freedom?

Anyone who doubts that looks can be deceiving will certainly reaffirm their faith in that axiom with **Liberty or Death**

In reality extended play reveals that **Liberty or Death** is an insightful challenging exploration of the events surrounding America s War for Independence

Players may opt to play as the Commander in Chief of either side and may further select among three possible candidates for that post. For the Americans there is George Washington but the player may also have the Continental Congress appoint either Charles Lee or Artemas Ward in his place British players have a choice between Henry Clinton Thomas Gage or William Howe

Choosing other than the historical commanders acts as a form of handicap for that side since the alternates possess lesser abilities in either leadership or tactics. A standard difficulty selection menu provides another method of handicapping the game Higher difficulty levels make money arms and provisions either scarcer or more expensive to purchase for resupply

For game purposes the colonies have been divided into 51 districts, each of which belongs to one of the three major regions. Northern Central or Southern. The object of the game is to control all of the districts or defeat all of the enemy armies in battle Whichever option the player pursues, the road will be arduous.

One method of defeat is if the American C in C is captured or killed in battle The British have the luxury of simply appointing another commander but once the American leader is gone the player may watch the computer play out the remainder of the game in his or her stead, but may not re-enter play

Command your troops as they confront the British or American colonial forces.

The depth achieved in **Liberty or Death** does not come from intricacies of the combat system, which is simple enough to master; rather it is derived from the economic and political manipulations required for successful play For example as the player sits in an appointed position it is necessary to curry the favor and support of Congress through action Failure to do so causes representatives from the districts least favorable to the player's position to call for a vote of confidence If a sufficient majority of Congress votes against the player, the game ends.

Further all of the subordinate officers must be coddled to a certain extent to retain their loyalty There are exceptions to this, but one does well to remember that these leaders came from either nobility or landed gentry and they expect to receive recognition accordingly

Economically the player receives a budget once per quarter which must be allocated between the officers (who demand a lot, if the player is wi ling to spend it) the Commissary & Quartermaster Generals the Navy and the Regiments

Building a naval presence early in the game is helpful While it is unlikely that one can gain control of the seas around all of the regions, an adequate navy serves two other immediate purposes revenue gained through privateering and support for joint attacks on coastal regions Money allocated to the regiments is divided equally and acts as a coffer for the local commander of each district. He has the option (either independently if so authorized or under the player's direction otherwise to spy on neighboring districts, bribe enemy commanders, purchase goods or even publish a pamphlet to attempt to expand support for the cause within his district.

Liberty or Death contains a myriad of player considerations which must be weighed each and every turn Throughout the game the level of detail is not oppressive yet it is comprehensive enough that the program is currently being considered for implementation in the curriculum of several nationally accredited universities. Koei is to be commended for keeping a game with such academic value intrinsically fun to play

—Ed Dille

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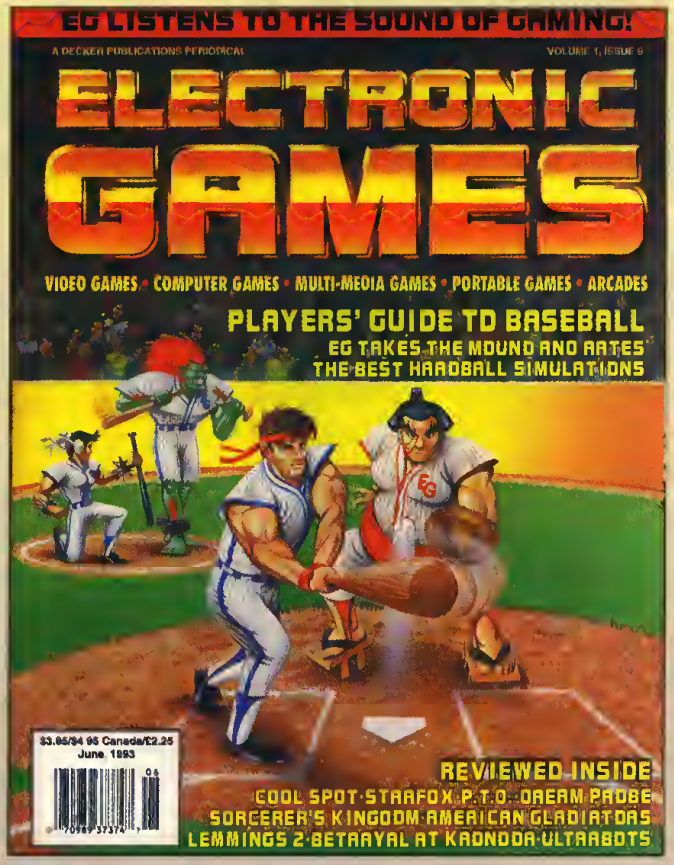

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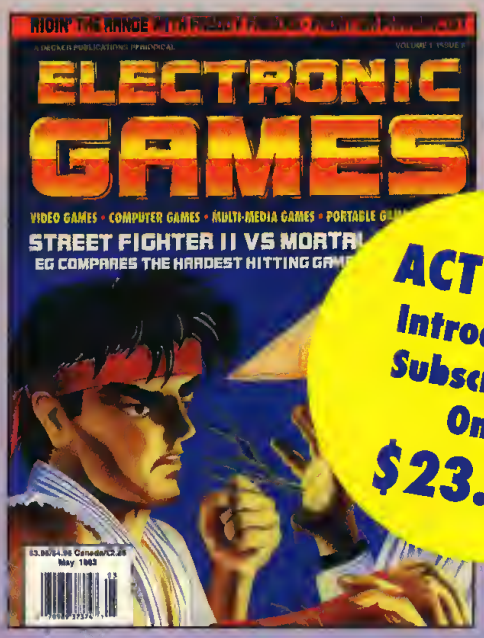

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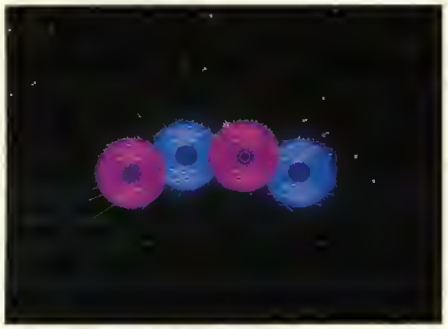


CD GALLERY

The 7th Guest

PUBLISHER	Virgin Games
SYSTEM	PC-CD ROM
THEME	Puzzle
MEGABITS	N/A
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	98%
SOUND	96%
PLAYABILITY	87%

OVERALL 96%

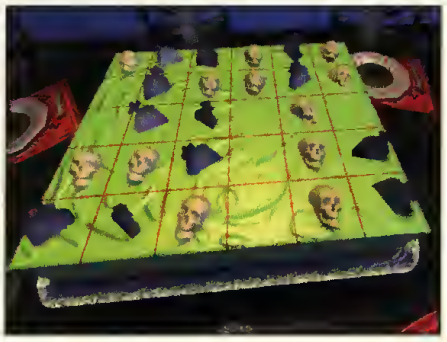
You've never been to a party quite like this one...

The gaming world has waited on pins and needles for the day when **The 7th Guest** actually arrived in stores. Much of the delay was caused by the need to fine tune and alter the program to the point where it would play on 386-format PCs. Unfortunately based on the latest pre-release copy, the 386 experiment was a failure In fact, during installation the software warns that running the game in MCGA/386 mode may lead to a less-than-ideal presentation In fact, this game should not be played on anything but a 486, where it is a most delicious piece of eye and ear candy

The 7th Guest tells the story of Henry Stauf, a vagabond and murderer who dreams one night of a beautiful doll which he recreates when he awakens. Soon thereafter he has a second dream this one of a unique puzzle which becomes a sensation of the day (the game is a post-Victorian period piece and starts Stauf on the road to riches as a master toymaker Soon however some of the children who received Stauf toys begin dying from a mysterious illness, all the while clutching their beloved toy close to their breast.

Stauf however, continues to prosper and as the realization of his greatest vision oversees the construction of a massive house, perched like a vulture atop a perpetually storm drenched hill

As the game begins the player witnesses the arrival of six spectral guests at the Stauf Mansion Periodically throughout the game ghostly scenarios are played out by these and other characters. As the player-character, however, the gamer awakens inside the strange house with no idea of how all this came



Mysterious and macabre mind-benders will test your mettle and your mind.

to be The object of the game: learn the secrets of the house and of Henry Stauf, as wel as the identity of the mysterious seventh guest.

The player is forced, initially, to move through the mansion in an extremely proscribed fashion Literally only one door can be opened This leads to the dining room, where the spirited guests stand poised around a ghoulish-looking cake decorated with 12 skulls 12 tombstones, and six plain sections. The instructions are then read aloud by one of the characters. each guest is to receive two skull sections, two tombstone decorated slices, and one plain piece The trick: each guest's portion must consist of non-diagonal, tangential slabs of cake Solving the puzzle unlocks the next room where a group of lettered cans must be stacked in a very special way

The puzzles are the shell that surrounds the center of audio/visual delight. Some of them are simple others are nearly impossible, but they provide the primary game content. Of course once the user has solved all the puzzles, there's still the puzzle of the house itself and that final guest who doesn't seem to have arrived yet.

The game uses a series of clever cursor-icons to give the player instant understanding of every object in the house. The primary cursor is a skeletal hand, which beckons the player in any of three directions (left, right or straight ahead), and wags its finger negatively when the user wishes to interact with an object or enter a room that is not available to them

As for those graphics, there has simply never been anything like them in an interactive game Each object is rendered down to the smallest detail from the delicate china and utensils in the dining room to the paintings on the wall — some of which take on a mysterious life of their own. And the musical score by the mysterious "Fat Man," is a full-bodied, cinematic delight.

This is not a typical adventure by any means. Except for the puzzles, there isn't much interaction; objects can't be picked up and used and the player can't talk with the other guests.

But even when judged solely on the basis of its striking presentation **The 7th Guest** is a game that belongs in *every* PC CD library, and is sure to provide hours of gaming enjoyment.

— Bill Kunkel

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PORTABLE PLAYTIME

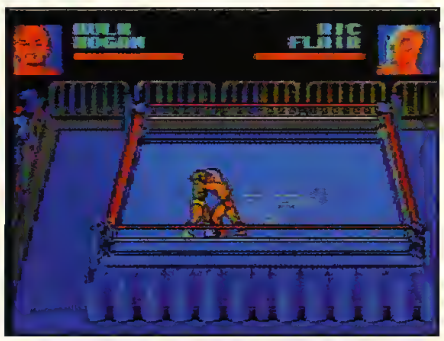
WWF Steel Cage Challenge

PUBLISHER	Flying Edge
SYSTEM	Game Gear
THEME	Wrestling
MEGABITS	2
PLAYERS	1 or 2
LEVELS	N/A
COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	71%

OVERALL 73%

Do you really want to push these wrestlers' buttons?

Wrestling simulations are very similar to **Street Fighter**-style games, the more action buttons the gamer has to play with, the better the game works. Capcom obviously believes this since it's producing a six-button controller for the Genesis edition of **SFII**. The reason? These games depend totally on a satisfactory range of moves for each combatant. We can see, for example, that the Acclaim/LJN/Flying Edge WWF games released for the SNES are uniformly better than those same titles on the Genesis, and the main reason seems to be the SNES' additional command buttons (six *vs.* three). Obviously, therefore, the Game Gear's two buttons create some serious problems for **WWF Steel Cage Challenge**, not to mention the diminutive screen size and lack of visual definition attributed to the wrestlers.



The squared circle sees a lot of heavy wrestling action in this WWF game.

The ten available WWF stars in this small-size grappling game are: Hulk Hogan, Shawn Michaels, Irwin R. Schyster ("I R.S."—get it?), Ric Flair, Bret Hart, Macho Man Randy Savage, Ted "The Million Dollar Man" Dibiase, Tatanka, Papa Shango and The Undertaker. There are no special moves or finishers as every wrestler has the same maneuvers.

Pre-game options include singles matches and tag team events as well as the ability to go for the WWF singles and tag titles by defeating the other grapplers on the program. Once the type of match has been selected, the difficulty level is set (easy, medium or hard), and the match is established as either a regular contest or a steel cage brawl, in which the winner is the first grappler to make it to the top of the cage.

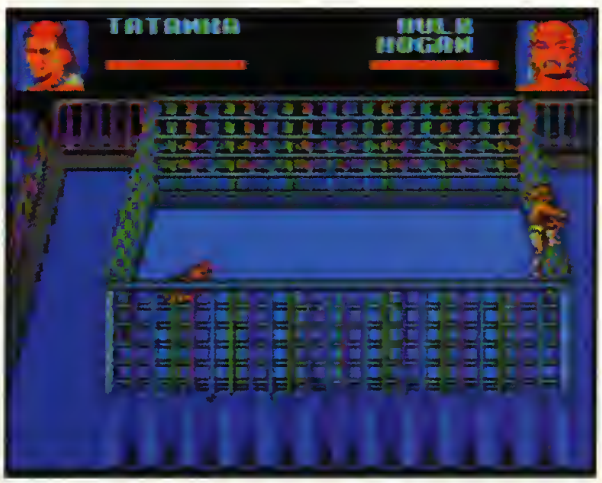
Watch out for the flying elbow drop! Your wrestler uses classic moves.

Given the limited input devices, there is an impressive range of possible maneuvers available, but it will take quite a bit of practice to master them, because so many require multiple input commands. There are the usual stomps and kicks as well as headbutts, slams, moves off the ropes, clotheslines, shoulderblocks, splashes, elbowdrops, and even maneuvers off the top rope.

The visuals are pretty disappointing, owing largely to the small screen and limited graphic range of the GG. Nonetheless, wrestling fans shouldn't have too much trouble identifying the distinctive-looking characters who comprise the WWF talent pool.

The bottom line here, however, is that the various weaknesses in the game play and visuals conspire to limit the amount of enjoyment gamers are likely to get from this version. Hardcore grappling fans will probably want to stick with the SNES versions.

— Bill Kunkel



Star Trek: The Next Generation

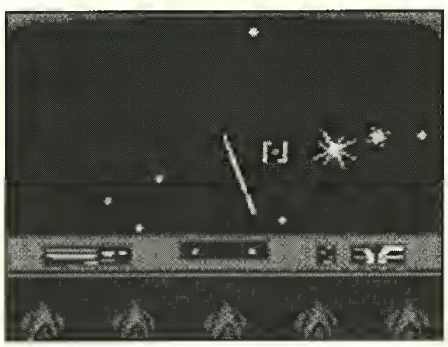
PUBLISHER	Absolute
SYSTEM	Game Boy
THEME	Simulation
MEGABITS	1
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	20
COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	93%
SOUND	91%
PLAYABILITY	84%

OVERALL 88%

Now the Game Boy goes where no one has gone before.

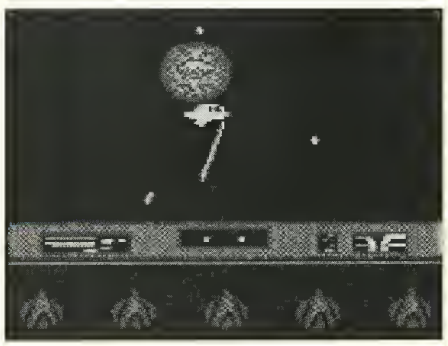
Star Trek: The Next Generation is an extremely ambitious Game Boy entry that casts the player as a cadet at Starfleet Academy There he will be faced with the challenges of the ultimate training simulation the Advanced Holodeck Tutorial, which allows the player-cadet to command the Enterprise in many missions devised by Captain Jean-Luc Picard.

The major characters in the Next Generation crew are all on board, albeit in simulated form, and part of the game s challenge involves taking maximum advantage of their skills, systems and experience The game contains over 100 different missions with the difficulty level increasing with each progressive assignment. The missions are actually more challenging than one might think.



Be alert for enemy fire when trying to outmaneuver your numerous foes.

Also on hand are some of the favorite enemy races confronted by the Enterprise's second-generation crew, such as the warlike Romulans, the enigmatic Tellarians and the commerce-mad Ferengi.



As commander of the Enterprise, your every tactical move must be precise.

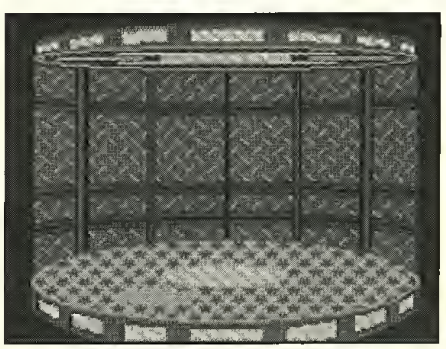
As the game begins, a Mission Briefing screen appears featuring the digitized image of Captain Picard along with specific mission instructions for the first game Players can then move forward to the main display· the primary viewscreen on the bridge of the Enterprise, complete with starfield. From here it is possible to contact various crew members. Lt. Worf (Tactical Systems) Lt. Cmdr Data (Operations), Lt. Cmdr. LaForge (Engineering), Lt. O'Brien (Transporter), and "Number One " better known as Cmdr Will Riker (Mission Control).

The detail in this game is truly impressive, and not occasionally daunting. Players can control Warp engines, Impulse (non-Warp) Speed, Navigation systems, and, of course Combat, with access to the ever-popular phasers and photon torpedoes as well as the defensive shields. Gamers can even beam down to planets once they have established an orbit around them.

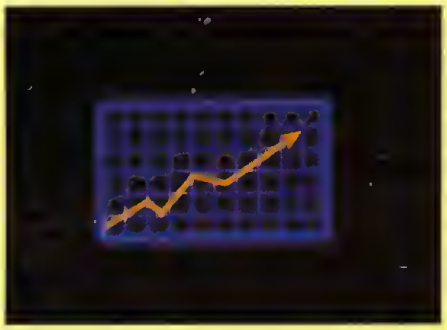
As the missions grow more difficult, there are more and more dangerous possibilities for the player to consider including an infiltration of the Enterprise by some as yet unkown enemy alien intruder As always, the crisis must be handled according to Federation standards, but your own cunning and skill will determine the eventual outcome.

Star Trek: The Next Generation does a splendid job of simulating the best features of the series The characters situations, and equipment all show a familiarity with the source material and a feel for the show's structure The fact that Absolute was able to recreate this on the Game Boy is all the more remarkable

— Bill Kunkel



There are many areas recreated in the game, including the teleport room.



KUNKEL REPORT

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Specialty Controllers

by Bill Kunkel

This issue's "Flashback" section provoked a lot of thought in these quarters regarding the history of specialty, exotic, deluxe i.e., non-standard—game controllers. Ever since the classic Atari 2600 joystick was created (a stick that was compatible with the 2600, all Atari computers, the C-64 *and* the Amiga!), manufacturers have fiddled with that classic design to produce some of the wildest, wackiest, most improbable contraptions this side of the Pentagon drawing board

The first great fiasco was Datasoft's LeStick, a pistol grip with a top-mounted fire button and no base. It used mercury switches to detect player manipulation and trigger on-screen movement theoretically. Its success is evidenced by its current status as Silicon Valley landfill

Then came Atari's own wireless joysticks; these babies were so thick you had to have hands the size of a first baseman's glove to even hold one. And who could forget the Joyboard? This surfboard style controller worked fine on the surfing and skiing games the producer (a small group of visionaries which included the creators of the Amiga, Atari Lynx, and 3DO) published, but it was less than optimal for **Space Invaders** or **Missile Command**. Or the Head Band controller that maneuvered game characters through the tensing of the user's forehead muscles. Although certainly a boon to aspirin manufacturers, it failed to make it off the floor at CES.

Mattel's Power Glove actually made it through its first Christmas before fading into the morass of electronic gaming trivia. It was great for the games it worked with, but no one wanted to look and feel like Darth Vader while playing **Tetris**.

Recently, a small company began showing up at CES with a sitdown controller in which the player leaned in the direction they wished their on-screen surrogate to move. In other words, you were literally sitting on a padded joystick equipped with arm grip action buttons.

The problem with these type of gimmick controllers is obvious: they're fine for certain types of games, but just flat out don't work on others. And nobody

Many new joysticks, such as Suncom's Night Force, provide advanced control.

wants to sit around with a satchel full of controllers, like an electronic golf bag, selecting the appropriate device for each game.

As a result, the most successful non-standard controllers have been those that refined the basic design of the prototype. Kraft and Wico were among the leaders during the joystick craze of the early 80s, Kraft with its reasonably-priced, ergonomically perfect joystick, and Wico with its larger-than-life, glow-in-the-dark variations on the classic Atari stick.

Nobody wants to sit around with a satchel full of controllers, like an electronic golf bag, selecting the appropriate device for each game.

The major problems with the Atari stick were its thick base (which Kraft streamlined) and its tendency to break (neither Wico nor Kraft sticks ever seemed to go down). By tending to these weaknesses, both companies experienced success during the boom, as did Suncom and several other companies that stayed with tried-and-true designs.

Remember the U-Force—the invisible joystick? Here was a product so bad it put the shakes to Broderbund, one of the soundest, most conservative companies (one might even say *too* conservative, but that's a subject for another column) in the gaming business. The U-Force was a joystick base covered with sensors over which the user moved a hand in order to direct on-screen motion. Somehow, the idea of using one's hand as a joystick when there were already perfectly acceptable joysticks around didn't really turn the market on. Oh, it looked very science fictional and all, but even Broderbund's confidence in the project was dubious since enclosed with the system came—you guessed it!—a guidance stick which could be inserted into the base.

The ultimate in controller design vapor-lock was represented by the early attempts to make joysticks out of the NES and SMS controllers. In their blind dedication to duplicating the standard control pad/multiple action button format of the original NES and SMS control devices, nobody even noticed that they were creating left-handed joysticks.

Now we're all bracing for the next generation of controllers: Sega's Activator and six-button **SFII** controllers for the Genesis, as well as the inevitable upscale versions of the standard Genesis and SNES controllers, offering everything from turbo fire to game manipulation features.

Who knows, maybe this time they'll get it right.

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THE JURY

Whew! When we asked our reader-jurors to tell us their reactions on **Sonic 2**, we let ourselves in for a landslide—and a very difficult selection process. We had to be hard-hearted about reviews we liked but were too long—200 words is the limit. Read the rules in the box to the right! Here are our choices...

Sonic the Hedgehog 2

Sega
Genesis

Winning Review
by Jonathan Coats

Sega revolutionized the action game genre by focusing on a theme radically new to the class: *Speed*. Sega's little blue hedgehog, Sonic, was a hit.

Now, in **Sonic 2**, he tears across the screen with a new partner, Tails. To justify the sequel, Sega added other new options to the game play. A two-player competitive mode can split the screen and allows gamers to compete in races across scenes of their choice. Also, new Bonus Rounds send Sonic and/or Tails on a ring-gathering race inside a frightening halfpipe.

Sonic is faster than ever in his second titie. He needs speed for these movesi

In my opinion, **Sonic 2** is a great success on the merits of its one-player mode alone. With the addition of the Super Spin "Dash," the little rodent blazes across a television fast enough to leave burn marks on the screen. I fall victim less often to Dr. Robotnik than to the time limit (while exploring each beautifully drawn, well-animated zone.)

The only notable downfall of the cartridge is the lack of difficulty involved in beating the bosses. But even this apparent weakness underscores Sonic's greatest strength: the objective of **Sonic 2** is not merely to cross the finish line, but to love every moment getting there.

Runner Up Review
by Antonio & Aifonso De Pasquale

For a sequel to be a success, it has to be as good as the original. This is the case with **Sonic 2**, the super charged sequel to the very popular **Sonic the Hedgehog**. Once again our blue, spiked hero must thwart the world domination schemes of Dr. Robotnik, who has enslaved Sonic's friends into building his ultimate weapon, the Death Egg.

With Tails as his sidekick, Sonic must once again stop the evil Doctor's plans.

This time around, Sonic is assisted by his friend Tails. Together they must race against time to rescue their friends, find the seven Chaos Emeralds, and stop the demented scientist before his plan comes to fruition.

The game play is lightning fast due to Sonic's arsenal, which includes his new Spin Dash and Power Sneakers. They allow him to spin like a speedball, perform loop-de-loops, warp through tunnels and twirl through twisting roadways. The graphics and soundtrack are just as good if not better than the original.

On the minus side, the game's two-player modes are disappointing, as the screen is difficult to make out and the action often slows to a crawl.

Sonic 2 is an unbeatable combination of cute characters, engaging music, solid game play, and out of this world graphics. Can **Sonic 3** be far behind?

Join the Jury

Review a game in EG's monthly contest!

Each month, **Electronic Games**' critics review dozens of new releases. They do a great job, but a lot of our readers are knowledgeable and perceptive about the games, too. Now, our unique monthly contest lets you strut your stuff. We'll pick a video cart each month, and challenge gamers to review it. Then, in "The Jury," **EG** will print the best ones—and give free software to the winner.

The rules are simple:

1. All reviews must be of the nominated game.
2. Entrants can submit only **one** review of each game.
3. All submissions become the property of **EG**.
4. Reviews should be 200 words or less, typed double-spaced.
5. The month's best review, as determined by **EG** editors, earns the writer the currently available video or computer game of his or her choice (sorry, no Neo-Geo carts).
6. The contest is open to anyone who has not sold professionally to **EG** within the previous 12 months (exclusive of this contest).

Game for Contest #10:
Tony La Russa Baseball/Sega/Genesis

Deadline for this month's contest:
JULY 1, 1993

Send entries to:
The Jury (Electronic Games)
330 S. Decatur, Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107

...and don't forget to tell us what video game you'd like if you are the winner!

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PLAYING IT SMART

The Conquest of Space For All Ages

by Joyce Worley

Some learning programs simply transcend age categories, to provide hours of entertainment for every user. Although they may be nominally slated for a certain age group, these programs deliver their messages in such broad strokes that everyone can receive them.

Space Adventure is loaded with lots of statistics about space exploration.

Such a product is **Space Adventure** (Knowledge Adventure Inc./MS-DOS), which boasts on its package that it's for ages 5 to 105. That's not too far from accurate. At the youngest age, non-readers can view a fascinating array of still and full motion screens. More advanced space-questers study the entire history of man's exploration of our solar system.

The main display screen holds a map, text window, picture, timeline, and a row of icons. Mouse or keyboard control moves a pointer across the picture window that produces pop-up balloons with information about objects. Travel buttons move the scene to a different time and place. Clicks on individual words in the text window produce an index, and the user can travel to new scenes by clicking on the name of the screen they want to see. Similarly, a click on the timeline moves the scene to the event nearest in time to that spot, and a click on the map moves the screen to the place nearest to the spot selected. A zoom feature moves the viewpoint closer or further from earth, which can be rotated to see the opposite side.

The icons are actually category buttons that focus the investigation on rockets, human exploration, robotic exploration, science, solar system, universe, or science fiction and the search for extraterrestrial life.

That's a bare-bones description; the excitement is provided by the excellent graphics, moving images, sounds and simulations which unfold man's greatest adventure, our exploration of space. This program well deserves the award it recently won from the Software Publishers Association, for the Best Secondary Education Program. You'll probably never really get to travel in space yourself, but this is certainly the best way to learn what we've seen and done so far.

Where In Space Is Carmen Sandiego? (Broderbund/MS-DOS) is a romp through the cosmos in pursuit of the notorious heister and her gang of aliens who are looting the universe of its treasures. Designed for ages 12 through adult, it uses the familiar format to explore space while seeking to halt the infamous Carmen.

The gamer receives clues about the suspect's identity and location, and tracks the thief through 32 locations in our solar system. Once the criminal is identified, the gamer can have a warrant issued; no arrest is binding without one.

The main display screen holds a viewport in the top half and control panel for the detective's gadgetry on the bottom. The viewport presents scenes of locations, maps, and information from the on-board computer's databank.

To receive clues, the gamer questions witnesses, listens to broadcasts, talks to an informant, and launches probes.

Underneath the cute trappings is an extensive database of space information, in 18 categories: the 9 planets, solar system, astronauts, astronomers, constellations, explorations, the Sun, asteroid belt, Halley's comet and a glossary. The player can browse these areas, or use search routines for any key word.

The locations visited are displayed on the viewport, along with a paragraph of description. There's also original music, with a theme for each heavenly body.

The graphics are authentic, beautiful, and a true joy to examine and read about. Broderbund used digitized NASA photographs, as well as video clips of planetary flybys. As gamers try to catch the Carmen gang, they see and learn about our solar system. Even if they never work up through the ranks to become Sun Admiral, the players will acquire vast amounts of solar lore.

Carmen is at it again, and she has left the Earth's atmosphere to escape!

These two programs discussed may seem similar, but they are quite different in their aim. **Space Adventure** focuses the learning on the history of man's exploration of space, while **Where In Space Is Carmen Sandiego** delivers a powerful load of information about our solar system. Both are usable by a wide range of ages, from prereaders who'll just roam the programs enjoying the pictures, to adults who long to travel where no man has gone before.

Both are great ways to keep watching the skies and learn about the barely-explored final frontier.

LORE

Super NES Games Secrets

Vol. 3, by Rusel DeMaria & Zach Meston, Prima Publishing, 300 pages (softbound, $9.99)

Déjà vu! This is the third in Prima's "Secrets of the Games" series, again subtitled "The Unauthorized Edition." This one has 24 chapters, one game each save for the last, which lists some short tips and passwords for an additional ten. Games covered in detail are: **Axelay, David Crane's Amazing Tennis, Desert Strike, F-1 ROC, Joe and Mac, Magic Sword, Magical Quest Starring Mickey Mouse, Prince of Persia, Rampart, Road Runner's Death Valley Rally, The Simpsons: Bart's Nightmare, Street Fighter II, Super Battletank, Super Bowling, Super Double Dragon, Super Mario Kart, Super Soccer, Super Soccer Champ, Super Star Wars, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV, Ultraman, Universal Soidier** and **WarpSpeed.**

The chapter on **Street Fighter II**, which was covered in Vol. 2, does not rehash the previous entry but adds some notes and pictures about the six different performance-dependent endings, and reveals how to match the same characters against each other, including Ken *vs.* Ken wearing the same colors.

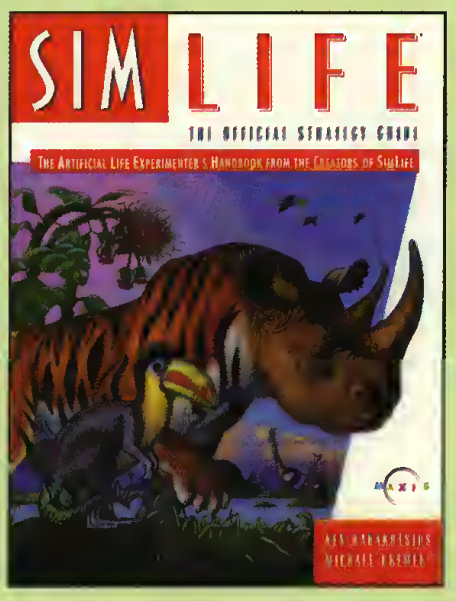
The chapter formats are slightly revised, but all the pertinent information, including those all-important codes and "secrets," is still there, clearly presented, with black and white illustrations and maps. Some screen shots come out a little dark, but most are clear; it's rare to see better anywhere else. All in all, in keeping with its predecessors, it's a good deal for the price.

— Ross Chamberlain

SimLife: The Artificial Life Experimenter's Handbook

Prima Publishing Corp., Ken Karakotsios & Michael Bremer, 346 pages (softbound, $18.95)

Fortunately for gamers, Maxis has found nothing too sacred to be made into a game. From their first incursions into the life of a city commissioner (**SimCity**) to the tour de force of genetic engineering (**SimLife**), Maxis has sought ways to let players wield near godlike power over all kinds of silicon-based life-



For those who find SimLife a bit hard, this new book gives life-giving tips.

forms. They are quick to point out that the intent is not for the player to assume the role of God, who is of course omniscient and would therefore already know the outcome of every possible eventuality. Rather, one is invited to become an interested, involved meddler in the great scheme of things, pondering the possibilities—and watching in abject horror the outcome of poor decision making.

Within this context, **SimLife** strayed the farthest from the base of knowledge and experience that players normally bring to a game. Thus, if ever there was a need for a more comprehensive guide than that provided by a standard player manual, **SimLife** gets the nod.

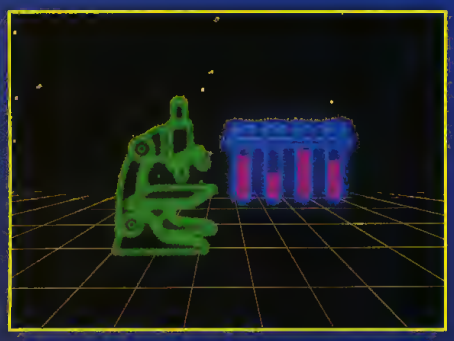
Prima is to be applauded for going to source (i.e., the nuclei of the Maxis design team) to author this work. The result is a treatment thorough enough to appease the most devout enthusiast of the game without reaching textbook proportions. Readers are invited to dive into whichever portion of the book first appeals to them; each chapter is finely crafted as a stand-alone treatment of the subject it discusses. Mr. Karakotsios suggests that one may begin at the last chapter and work one's way backward to the beginning, much as the study of evolution itself is pursued.

The first three chapters match the game manual. Experienced players should begin with Chapter 4, "Of Space, Time, and Orgots," which discusses cellular automata, abstract mathematical models of natural evolutionary phenomena on computers. To understand the concepts of the modeling **SimLife** uses is to appreciate the depth of the program.

Subsequent discussions involve the interrelationship of various elements of nature that go into successful biome building. Climate and soil building are emphasized as they relate to the development of plant and animal life-forms. Interdependence in the food chain is illustrated via charts and line diagrams that help the player to understand why some of their experiments succeed while others are doomed to failure. Finally, the intricacies of the gene pool are examined and a number of sample experiments illustrate many of the advanced concepts of the program.

If all of this sounds boring and academic, rest assured that the treatment is not. **SimLife** is one of the most fascinating recreations of actual scientific studies for the home computer and it has been accomplished in a manner that is totally un-oppressive. Further, *SimLife: The Artificial Life Experimenter's Handbook* extends the tone of the original work, maintaining a high level of cerebral stimuli without losing sight of the fun at the heart of it all.

— Ed Dille



TEST LAB

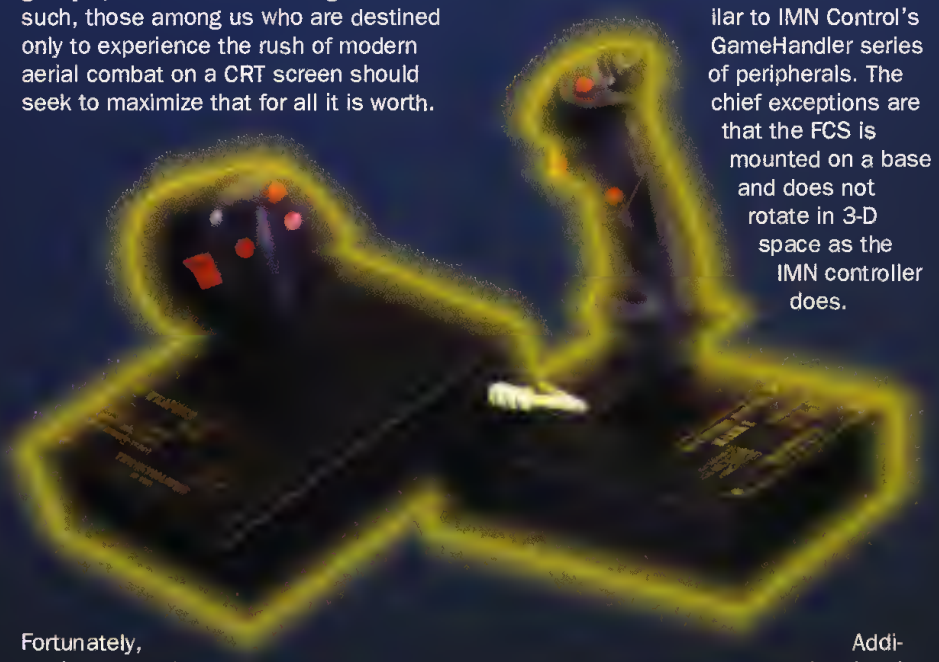
Taming the Unfriendly Skies

Thrustmaster Control Systems
Rudder Control System—$149.95
Flight Control System—$99.95
Pro Flight Control System—$149.95
Weapons Control System—$99.95

Interface Dynamics
Rudder Control System Mounting Brackets—$120.00
Armrest Brackets for either FCS or WCS—$59.95 or $99.95 a pair
Keyboard mount—under development, not priced as yet.

Not everyone can maximize the experience they obtain from flight simulators, but those that can afford it will find that they can come surprisingly close to the real thing. Last month, Test Lab explored the enhancements one could enjoy from purchasing top of the line flight yokes, such as CH Product's Virtual Pilot and Suncom's G-Force Yoke. Pure jet jockeys, however, may eschew the way a yoke feels in their hands, and opt for a more slick HOTAS (hands on throttle and stick) approach. Such a preference is best fulfilled for aspiring Top Guns with a combination of products offered by Thrustmaster Control Systems and Interface Dynamics respectively.

Although far from cheap (the setup we will model herein costs over $600.00), diehard flight simulation enthusiasts should consider piecing out these peripherals over a period of time to ensure the quintessential vicarious experience. The vast majority among us will never enjoy the thrill of riding in the back seat of a high performance aircraft, let alone piloting it. Extending that contention, even among career professional combat pilots, many will never actually enter combat in the airframes they have diligently spent a lifetime training to use. As such, those among us who are destined only to experience the rush of modern aerial combat on a CRT screen should seek to maximize that for all it is worth.



Fortunately, hardware development companies like Thrustmaster Control Systems have recognized this need and marketed products to cater to it...at a price, of course.

The Thrustmaster Flight Control System (FCS) is the only true multiple function joystick for IBM and compatible computers. Modeled after the actual control stick of the F-4 Phantom, the FCS is designed as the first step to free players from the constraints of keyboard control. Many software companies have modeled their software to take advantage of the special features offered by the FCS (see table 1), but the unit can also function as a standard two-button joystick with other simulations, if desired. In appearance, the FCS is most similar to IMN Control's GameHandler series of peripherals. The chief exceptions are that the FCS is mounted on a base and does not rotate in 3-D space as the IMN controller does.

Additionally, the FCS features a 4 position cooley (hat) switch on the top of the stick. Otherwise, the 4 remaining contact switch push buttons are configured identically. Configured for right handed players, the stick features a trigger type switch for the index finger, a wrap around secondary button in the normal rest position of the little finger and three other buttons which may be manipulated individually by the thumb. One of these is located on the

"...those among us who are destined only to experience the rush of modern combat on a CRT screen should seek to maximize that for all it is worth... Thrustmaster Control Systems has recognized this need and marketed products to cater to it."

left of the controller, on an elongated ledge that serves as a rest position for the thumb. The other two, including the aforementioned cooley switch, are located on the top rear of the stick, near the extended position of the player's thumb. The functions of the various buttons vary according to the software and are summarized in the table on this page.

The FCS is designed to be used independently or in conjunction with the Weapons Control System (WCS), which is sold separately. A sturdier version of the FCS, called the Professional Flight Control System (PFCS), is also available for about $50.00 more per copy. The differences between the FCS and PFCS involve higher quality springs and a lack of self centering. Although most players would view self centering sticks as the norm, the reality is that actual flight sticks are held in place in the last position they were placed until moved again by the pilot. The PFCS allows this type of control and it is a decided advantage for players with programs that still require keyboard access (particularly two-handed access like Alt or Ctl key combinations).

The WCS is a fully independent stick that simulates throttle and weapons control for most flight simulators. Designed for left hand control, the unit features 6 control buttons and a separate 3-position rocker switch. A wide handle design keeps the unit comfortable and all of the buttons accessible, even in the heat of the moment. On the fore grip, two buttons are selectable by the index finger and a third is in the natural rest position of the middle finger. Two of the remaining buttons are located slightly above and below the rest position of the player's left thumb (ie: on the right side of the controller), such that contact is never lost but one must make a conscious effort to actually activate those functions. Slightly retracted from these positions is a third button and the aforementioned rocker switch. As before, each button holds different functions based on software and the tables which accompany the product are several pages of the manual and not reprintable herein. Suffice to say that, in addition to the products supported by the FCS, the WCS also supports: F-19 Stealth Fighter, Flight of the Intruder, Their Finest Hour, Battlehawks, A-10E Tank Killer, Wing Commander F-14 Tomcat, Jet Fighters I & , Flight Simulator 4, Red Baron F-29 Retaliator LHX Attack Chopper and Origin's new Strike Commander. Players need only to configure the 8 position dip switch of the WCS to take advantage of the features of their favorite product. Further, an upgrade to the existing WCS will be available shortly after this article hits print. The Mark II WCS will no longer be dependent on software company support to ensure its continued viability. Instead, this unit will be fully player programmable, such that any keyboard manipulation required by current or future programs may be input into the WCS in any configuration desired.

TITLE	HAT	TRIG	#1	#2	#3
F-15 SE III	View	Fire	Bomb	Tgt Sel	Brk Loc
Comanche	View	Fire	Tgt Loc	Turn L	Turn R
Aces Pacific	View	Fire	Ext.View	Bomb	Wpn Sel
Air Warrior	View	Fire	Bomb	Brake	View
AV8B Harrier	View	Fire	Tgt Sel	Wpn Sel	Funct
Gunship 2000	View	Fire	Tgt Loc	Wpn Sel	Rockets
Yeager Combat	View	Fire	Tgt Loc	Wpn Sel	Flaps
Falcon 3.0		Fire	Wpn Sel	AA/AG	Air Brk
SWOTL		Fire	Can Fire		
F-117 Stealth		Fire	Bomb		
F-15 SE		Fire	Tgt Sel		
Mantis		Fire	Missile	Throt	Tgt Sel
X-Wing		Fire	Rotate	Tgt Sel	Hud
Air Trans. Pilot		Flp up	Flp dwn	Gearup	Geardwn
Harrier Jump Jet	Fire	Wpn Sel	Mode		
ATAC		Fire	Bomb	Wpn Sel	Air Brk
Heroes of 357th	Fire	View	Can Fire	Rock Fire	

The remaining member of the ultimate flight control triad is Thrustmaster's Rudder Control System (RCS). Constructed of gold anodized aluminum, the unit is designed to mount underneath the player's desk and is compatible with all programs that support external rudder pedals. At the time of this writing, these products are Aces of the Pacific, Falcon 3.0, Gunship 2000 Flight Simulator 4, ATP, Flight of the Intruder and A-10 Tank Killer (version 1.5). SWOTL will support the RCS with a separate TSR available from Thrustmaster.

Aficionados who wish to extend their experience even farther can purchase one or more of the mounting accessories for Thrustmaster products from Interface Dynamics (603-569-4638). They manufacture a flight chair and brackets which are compatible with their chair or several other standard office chairs. Sidearm brackets are sold to mount the FCS, WCS or both and the player can also opt to get brackets which suspend the RCS off the floor and the keyboard (still a necessary evil in some applications) over the player's lap.

The cost of a complete package of the accessories discussed herein runs $600 to $800, depending on whether one already has a suitable swivel chair. Is the average player going to run out and purchase all of these items at that price (which equates to a major portion of private pilot lessons)? That is doubtful, but it doesn't mean that those players with the resources to build a system such as this over time should not do so.

On the contrary, the products discussed herein are quality designs made with lasting components. Further, their value extends beyond aesthetics. Thrustmaster has sought to tame the unfriendly skies for the armchair aviator and, to date, no one is better at it than they are. One can trust and expect Thrustmaster to continue producing quality products well into the future.

— Ed Dille

Gaming On-Line

Legends of Future Past

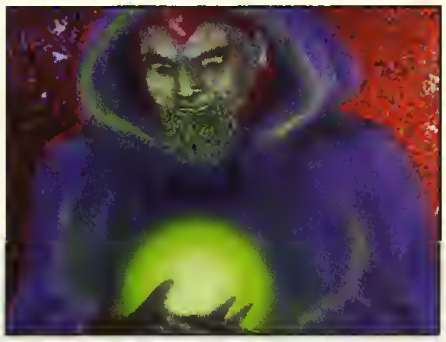
Novalink
(formerly the Digital Dreams Network)
300/1200/2400 baud
$6.00 per hour connect charges, plus access fees if not local

The first thing that veterans will notice about Andor is the similarities it possesses with other worlds they may have adventured in, either on paper or on the computer. But further inspection reveals that Andor is more different than similar to anything they have experienced up to that point. The major difference lies not in its fictional premise, which is a compilation of numerous science fiction and fantasy themes. Rather it is in the nature that the world of Andor evolves. Unlike set piece adventures, where the player must conform to restrictive character classes and alignment, and where the objective is pre-ordained even if the pacing of the story is non-linear, the game masters at Novalink operate on the fly. No one, either behind the scenes or playing the game, can reliably predict what Andor's situation will be six months from now.

To appreciate subsequent discussion, one must be provided a little background. Andor is a post apocalyptic planet which has struggled to regain order. Following the cataclysm (wrought by ancient technology) survivors vied amongst themselves to gain control of the ruins. At some point, an event known as the change occurred where some life forms remained the same while others evolved millions of years in a single century. The end result is that humans now share the world with the elfin of the forest, highlanders from the mountains, murg of subterranean dwellings, wolfling shape-changers, drakin of the skies, mechoids (machines imbued with a spirit), and ephemerals, a race of noncorporeal entities. Magic, Psionics and even Cybernetics play crucial parts in the interrelationship of all of these races.

New players begin in the city of Fayd, somewhat of a refuge from the harsher places nearby in the wastelands. They may have up to three characters generated for their account but these operate as individuals. They are free to interact with any other character, either NPC or other humans, in the course of their travels. Certain quests and events are always available to them, but the real meat of the service involves the personalized attention afforded the player.

As mentioned previously, Andor is a dynamic evolutionary environment, where the actions of players (particularly high level veterans) will impact upon the whole. Novalink has a full time writing staff that develops individualized and group quests based on actions that players have initiated. Further they develop extended quests every weekend and special events open only to members of certain guilds. The result of these efforts is both an enhanced suspension of disbelief for the player and an immediacy in the completion of these quests that rivals well-run Friday night pen and paper games.



On-line adventuring hits new heights with Novalink's Legends of Future Past.

Some players may balk at the lack of graphics, but Andor could not offer the level of richness and diversity that it does if it were strapped to a graphical interface. Consider the time that must be invested to create a single dungeon in any other program that one wishes to compare and it's clear that Andor's greatest strengths lie in personalization. In addition to these smaller quests (many of which are interrelated in ways that are not readily apparent until much later), the Sysops at Novalink periodically introduce a Grand Villain that threatens the existence of the entire realm. Most recently, this arch-rival was Syrix, and it took the combined efforts of all of the members of the net to eliminate his power over six months of real time.

These are the quests that dreams are made of, and even if Novalink has abandoned the Digital Dreams logo, one hopes that they continue to dream, and that new players flock to the banner of Andor to keep the dream alive.

— Ed Dille

Coming Attractions...

In the August Edition of Electronic Games

Players' Guide to Interactive Cartoons and Comics

Why just watch a cartoon or read a comic book when you can live them? This blockbuster section covers all the hot new games and previews the ones still in development. We'll take you behind the scenes to meet the designers and developers, and get the reactions to the games from some of the biggest names in animation and comic books.

EG Picks the CES Winners

Fresh from a week at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, the EG staff picks the most exciting new video, computer, multimedia and portable games from the world's most important gaming industry event.

Bridge: Confrontation of the Card Games!

Let's put all the cards on the table. Which electronic bridge programs are the real deal? This feature doesn't miss a trick giving you the real score in this wide and intensely competitive category.

And Be Sure to Look For the Very Latest in High-End Gaming, Including:

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- Gaming On-LIne
- Lore

and don't forget all the latest news and previews in **EG's Hotline!**

Look For All This and Much More At Newsstands July 22, 1993!

LET EG KNOW WHAT YOUR FAVORITE GAMES ARE!

We want to know what you're playing, and to receive your vote for the most popular game programs each month. Fill out your choices below, then send your poll sheet (or a photocopy if you prefer) to: Electronic Games Reader Poll, 330 S. Decatur, Ste. 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107

My favorite video games are:

1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite computer games are:

1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite multimedia game is:

1._____

My favorite coin-op game is:

1._____

LANDS OF LORE™

THE THRONE OF CHAOS

The Dark Army encroaches. King Richard falls. And Scotia beckons you, laughing...

In her mad quest for power, Scotia has ravaged the kingdom. She seeks the throne, yet it eludes her. She's getting desperate. She's getting mean.

CAN YOU STOP HER? DO YOU DARE?

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❧ **Indulge in a Land of Sensory Delights -** Over 20 megabytes of compressed art and special effects. Actually hear the clash of steel! Feel the blows of terrors who slip beneath your guard!

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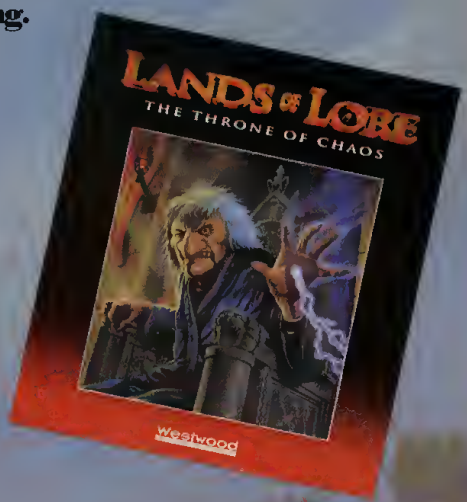

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SEE US AT CES JUNE 3-6
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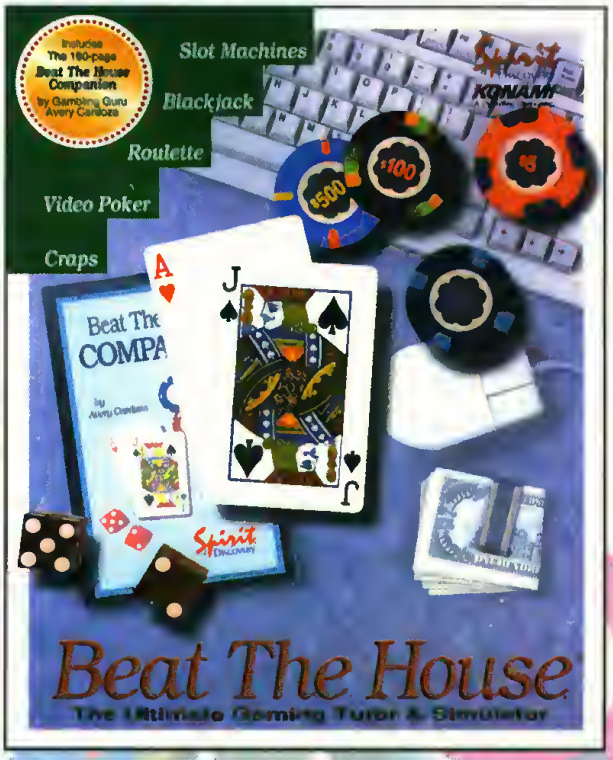
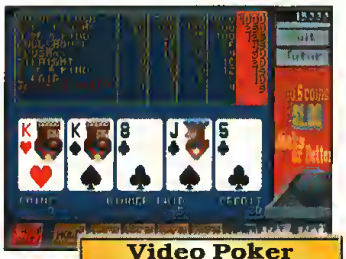
Some play for fun...



Others play to win!

Blackjack
Learn to count cards and win!



Video Poker
Learn what to hold or when to draw!

Roulette
Learn money management!

Beat The House makes learning fun!

Intimidated by casino gaming because you're unfamiliar with the rules? Ever wondered why the word "seven" is met with glares at a craps table? Is the guy next to you at blackjack just lucky, or is he on to something that you don't know?

Learn to Count Cards and more

Beat The House is the ultimate gaming tutor and simulator for your PC. With a 160-page study guide by gambling guru Avery Cardoza and an on-line "pop-up" tutor to make recommendations and offer suggestions, you'll be shooting the die and slinging the lingo like a pro in no time.

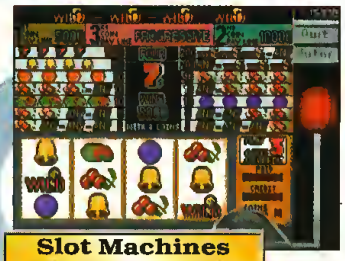
Feel like part of the action

Dazzling VGA graphics and realistic sound put you right on the casino floor where the chips are flying and the competition is fierce. Play against your friends or let the computer fill the empty seats - watch out. *they play to win!*

Don't gamble on the other guys.

Learn how to Beat The House!

Now available at software retailers throughout America.



Slot Machines
Multiple payout or progressive!

Craps
Learn to maximize your odds!

Spirit of Discovery

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